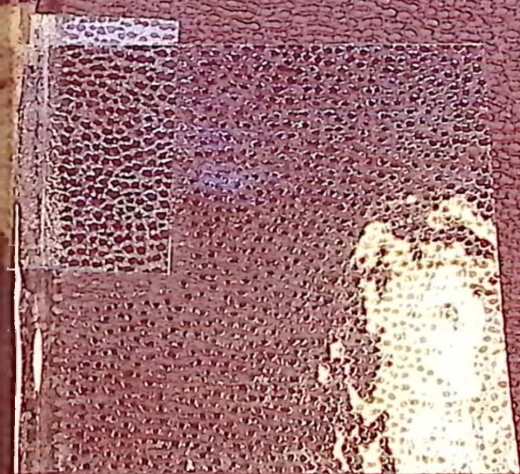


Great Sermons
by
Great
American Preachers

THEODORE W. ENGSTROM





Great Sermons by Great American Preachers

Compiled and Edited by
THEODORE W. ENGSTROM
Editor, *The Christian Digest*

THIRD EDITION



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GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

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DEDICATED
BY THE COMPILER
TO HIS WIFE,
DOROTHY

PREFACE

THERE perhaps is no type of religious book which has a stronger appeal to both ministers and laymen alike than volumes of heart-warming sermons. Messages from God's Word in printed form have been a means of untold blessing and help to thousands of believers, and additional thousands have come to a saving knowledge of Christ through the reading of the printed Word.

Our thought in compiling a volume of outstanding sermons from the great preachers of our land is not to add another volume to an already crowded field, but rather to include in one book, messages from outstanding men which would have an appeal to many groups of people and different types of mind.

It has been our purpose in this compilation to secure messages from leaders in the various evangelical denominations in all sections of the country. Represented in this volume are Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Lutherans, Nazarenes, etc. These men come from all parts of the country—from Massachusetts to California, from Canada to Texas. We feel that in this volume we have a cross-section of the fundamental, sound ministers of the Gospel who today are preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ Jesus.

We sincerely trust that this volume will prove of help, strength and blessing to all who open its pages. May we each one of us "study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15).

T. W. ENGSTROM

Grand Rapids, Michigan

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WILLIAM WARD AYER

Dr. William Ward Ayer is pastor of the Calvary Baptist Church, New York City. He has had a wide Bible Conference and radio ministry. He is the author of *Questions Jesus Answered*, *God's Answers to Man's Doubts*, etc.

CHAPTER I

CHRIST'S DISCIPLES AND THE CRISIS OF CALVARY

MARK 14:32-46

IT REQUIRES a crisis to test character. In normal situations it is possible to display the merely superficial aspect of our characters; but when a crisis comes, what we really are is openly revealed. Every crisis in Christ's life showed the solid gold of His character, while at the same time the test revealed much dross in the lives of His followers.

Gethsemane was Christ's supreme crisis. There Jesus struggled mysteriously in making the final surrender of "obedience unto death, even the death of the cross." We do not pretend to know the full meaning of Gethsemane: we only know that Christ was to go to the Cross and there be made an offering for sin; there He was to suffer alone the wrath of God.

The name Gethsemane means "oil press," and Gethsemane's Garden had been a place where olives were crushed until they gave forth their healing juices. This was indeed an appropriate name for the place where the soul of Jesus was crushed in agony.

We cannot comprehend in all its fullness the mystery of our Lord's suffering in the Garden, but we may under-

stand it somewhat when we realize that a Sinless Being was to become sin and to die as a propitiation for sin.

THE PRINCE OF LIFE DIED

You and I cannot understand experimentally the meaning of this truth. We are children of death—we are born in death and live all our life with its virus in us. But Jesus was a Child of Life.

We all remember the shock of our first real experience with death. I was scarcely six when my mother died. I had no conception of death and did not weep until her body was carried out of our home. But I was eighteen when an older sister died, and when you are eighteen you feel immortal. For death to break in upon your consciousness then is stark tragedy.

Death! Awful, cold, still, immovable death! Breasts that moved no more with the pulsations of life. Eyes that closed to crumble into memoryless dust. Lips that no longer smiled or spoke. White, cold, motionless hands. *This was death!* Here I saw the direct anti-thesis of what I possessed. My blood was rich as wine, my body vigorous and tireless in activity; life to me was gay and beautiful.

The question came to my heart: *Must I too die?* The thought haunted me. Would *my* eyes close never to open? It was too horrible to believe. My soul shuddered by day at the thought, and I tossed in my dreams at night.

Those fears have largely passed after thirty years. Of course the fear of the hereafter disappeared when Jesus came into my heart and brought eternal life, and I do not refer so much to the hereafter as to physical dissolution—the death of the body and its return to the dust from which it was made. That fear is not very

real to me now, for I have been much in contact with death and am partially reconciled to it. I am in no hurry to die and am not rushing to meet the "enemy," but I shall not be afraid to meet him, if the Lord tarries.

Some who have grown old have told me they look forward with anticipation to death. For the aged it is a boon of rest for wearied body and tired mind "(where) the wicked cease from troubling and . . . the weary be at rest."

Why then did Jesus apparently cringe and falter in the presence of it? Was He afraid of the sufferings of the Cross? Perish the thought! I will not believe that Jesus was less courageous than the thousands of His followers who have gone to their death for His sake singing and unafraid. What we should see is that death—the awful enemy—was foreign to the nature of the Son of God.

And not only so, but *the death He was to die was vastly different from the death that men die*. His soul was to be made an offering for sin. I do not comprehend the full significance of that fact, but the statement has an ominousness which tells of awful suffering.

THE CURTAIN WAS DRAWN

Very little of Christ's experience in Gethsemane was revealed to curious eyes. Jesus entered deep into the shadows of the Garden as though to hide from the brilliancy of the spring moon. The shadows of the olive trees mercifully hid His agony, even as the darkness of Calvary hid the excruciating suffering of His soul from the eyes of men. It has not pleased the Holy Spirit to give us an intimate insight into the soul-struggle of the Son of God. The intensity of it, seen by the

bloody sweat which rolled from the kneeling form and dropped upon the ground and His agonizing cry that the cup might pass from Him, reveals the presence of great personal testing.

The crisis was *personal*. There was no Tempter here, as in the temptation during the forty days in the wilderness when Christ met the Devil. *Was this a struggle for personal obedience?* The thought at first seems foreign to our conception of the Divine Christ, yet the Word declares, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered."

Our chief interest, however, centers in the relationship of certain groups to Jesus. Look at the Scriptural setting of our study. After the Lord's Supper had been instituted in the upper room at Jerusalem, Jesus with eleven disciples went out of the city, crossed the Brook Kidron, and made His way toward the Garden of Gethsemane where He was wont to pray. As He approached the Garden, a hush and heaviness came over His spirit. We are told that He began to be "sore amazed, and to be very heavy" (terms which may be translated "filled with consternation and sorrow").

When He reached the shadows of the Garden He divided His disciples into two groups. To the first group He said, "Sit ye here, while I shall pray." Then He took Peter, James and John and went a little farther into the Garden, saying, "Tarry ye here, and watch . . . My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death." It would appear, therefore, that the death of Jesus was of such a nature that He felt the pangs of it long before He was nailed to Calvary's Cross. His was not mere physical death. His was a spiritual death—"No man taketh (my life) from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it

again." One writer has suggested that He feared that through the sorrow of His heart, death might overtake Him even before He went to Calvary.

THREE GROUPS IN THE GARDEN

Jesus divided His disciples into two groups. Eight disciples formed one group, and three comprised the other. There were but eleven in all because Judas had gone to betray the Lord Jesus. He had taken the sop from the hand of the Lord and had gone out into the night. Therefore we might say that the disciples were divided into three groups. Judas, having allied himself with the enemies of the Lord, was soon to manifest that enmity in his betraying kiss.

We have here a picture of the modern Church. Most of the professed followers of the Lord Jesus may be divided into one of these three groups. For purposes of our study we shall call these groups the "Indifferentists," the "Partial Pretensionists" and the "Antagonists." Eight disciples were included in the first group. Peter, James and John comprised the second, and Judas and those associated with him formed the last group.

I. WE STUDY FIRST THOSE WHOM WE CALL THE "INDIFFERENTISTS"

To this group Christ said, "Sit ye here, while I shall pray." Note again that eight disciples were present. Judas had gone. The greater part of our Lord's followers were here, two-thirds of the total group.

It is a sad thing to find that after three and one-half years of intimate fellowship with their Lord, two-thirds of the disciples were undependable in the hour of crisis. It is a sadder thing to find that after more than nineteen hundred years in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ,

an even greater proportion of the professing Church knows very little about the crisis hour to which we have come in these last days.

Obviously Jesus did not expect much from this group. He realized their blindness to the significance of the hour to which the eternal purpose of God had brought them. The Cross was ahead. Not only the gathering hatred of the leaders of His nation was to be poured out upon Him, but also the hatred of the world. All hell was to hold carnival around the Cross in its supposed triumph over the Son of God. The most awful transaction of history was about to be consummated. Surely these men should have had some inkling of the coming drama. But no, they were oblivious to it. So Jesus said sadly, "Sit ye here, while I shall pray."

This statement of Jesus was equivalent to saying, "You are all spiritually asleep in this crisis hour. I cannot expect any help from you. Sit down. Keep quiet. I am going yonder to pray." There is a rich analogy here. It is a picture of our own day. Who shall say that these are not days of similar crisis in the Church of God? The world has gone mad—stark mad. First it went mad with the awful madness of the first World War. Then came the insane pursuit of wealth and power. As a result the world stumbled and plunged headlong into unprecedented economic depression. We see it now plunged deeply into the red madness of a global war, and we shudder at the slaughter and destruction.

CHURCHES FAST ASLEEP

The nations are in travail. The world is sick and tottering. Where are the disciples of the Lord who should be standing like the prophets of old, warning the people against the day of trouble? One wonders

sometimes if the world is not more concerned than the Church.

Normally there should have been a great revival ere this, and there would have been had God's people been alert and prayerful, cognizant of the condition of the world in which they live. Had we sought it, God would have sent a revival to shake this continent from center to circumference. If you will look into the matter you will discover that *every depression in American history except the last has been followed by a great spiritual revival*. But this time men's hearts have been more unrepentant than in all our history.

When we were well into the depression, Roger Babson, the statistician, announced the need for a religious revival to save the country from disaster. He said: "The sure safeguard against degeneration is regeneration—that alone. I believe there is a fair chance that this recklessness and greed are not strewn from without. They germinate within the human mind. Only as the hearts of our people are cleansed of evil can we hope to avoid falling into evil. A permanent economic revival depends upon an immediate spiritual revival."

BABSON WAS RIGHT

Who knows about more economic conditions than Roger Babson? Again, he says: "Not as a preacher or as a prophet, but as an ice-cold statistician, I give you my formal report that essentially the so-called business cycle is a revolution of character. Its pulse is our human heartbeats. Its rotations are the wheels in our own heads."

Every right-thinking person knows that we cannot have normalcy in our nation without righteousness. As long as we have greed we will have thievery, as long as

we have grasping hearts we will have grasping hands, and while we have stupidity and trickery in the administration of government, our economic systems will fail. Men must be made righteous at the center of their being. *We must get godliness back into the hearts of people and into their lives, if we ever expect to maintain the gloriousness of this nation!*

Oh, that the Church of Christ might awaken, and awakening might fall upon its knees and pray and agonize before God until things are brought to pass in our nation which will preserve us from the decay that has come upon so many other nations of the world. But alas, today, as in the days of the Lord Jesus, the great majority of the professing Church are sound asleep in the presence of the crisis.

And the Lord said, "Sit ye here, while I shall pray." Three-quarters of the whole discipleship indifferent to the hour!

SEE WHO WAS THERE!

Now, what was the trouble? Was Jesus partial? Did He exclude these eight followers from intimate fellowship? No, not at all. As with us, the trouble lay within themselves. Look at the disciples included in the group. Matthew and Andrew were there, and Thomas and Philip. The others were nondescript. But we would expect greater things from these four at least. Of course, Thomas was a doubter and little can be expected from the man who doubts in the hour of crisis. Philip was spiritually visionless. He it was who said, "Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us." And again to Jesus at the time of the feeding of the five thousand he declared, "Two hundred pennyworth of bread would not feed this multitude."

But Matthew was a man of unusual ability. He wrote the First Gospel, and attained to prominence in the kingdom. When Jesus had found him at "the seat of custom" and said, "Follow me," Matthew had immediately risen and left his position and followed Jesus. Not only had he done this, but he was also interested in getting others to know Jesus, and had made a great supper and invited Jesus to meet with his friends at the meal. Then in the hour of crisis Matthew failed.

Andrew was also an unusual character. His name means "manly," and he was a manly fellow. If you will study his life you will find that he was always interested in leading someone to Jesus. He brought Peter, his brother, and he brought the Greeks to see Jesus. On nearly every occasion he seemed to be spiritually-minded; but in the great crisis Andrew failed.

There is a sad lesson here, namely, that people who should be dependable fail the Lord in the hour of crisis—largely because there is some weakness in their character. I have known a good many people of this type in the Church—people on whom I thought I could depend, only to find that when some testing came they failed utterly. The crisis revealed their true character. I have long since ceased to believe in my ability to read a man's character. I have trusted in so many people and found them to be faithless that lately I have decided that only God knows what is in a man. It is best to watch people and let time reveal the truth or falseness of their character. Some are all right as long as everything is going their way. But God will see that everything will not go the way the child of God wants it to go because He wants to test him in the hour of adversity. It is not what you do in the sunshine, but what you

do in the shadow, that proves the worth of your character.

FIND YOUR PICTURE

Why is it that God does not use the great majority of us more than He does? Why does He have to say to so many of us, "Sit ye here. Keep quiet. I cannot depend upon you"? It is because we are undependable. The descendants of these disciples are all about us. They include the *nominal Christian*, whose religion is a Sunday affair to be largely forgotten during the rest of the week. Such people have "week-end religion"—a religion that is weak at both ends.

Among the descendants of the disciples we find the *worldly Christian*, who has never separated himself to God, and therefore cannot be depended upon in a crisis. Remember Abraham. He knew what was going to happen in Sodom because he kept out of Sodom. Lot, who was in Sodom, did not know, and was blind because he lived in Sodom. You cannot impress a worldly Christian with the dangers of the present world-situation because he is a part of it; and he probably will declare that you are far too pessimistic.

Also among the descendants of the disciples is the *fanatically indifferent Christian*, who says resignedly, "Well, these are the last days and the Lord is coming, and we are going to sit down and wait until He comes." No one hopes for the soon Return of the Lord more than I. But I have never understood that faith in His Return was an excuse to be indifferent toward a perishing world. "Occupy till I come," was His injunction. The coming of the Lord was never intended to be a city of refuge for spiritual cowards. It was to be a glorious objective for Christian heroes. One might well

imagine some obscure disciple excusing his indifference by saying, "Well, it is prophesied that Christ is to be crucified anyway, so what can I do about it?" In much the same manner some today are saying, "Well, the world is going to pieces and the Lord is coming. It is all according to prophecy."

The Lord says to these people, "Sit ye here, while I shall pray."

Also included among the "Indifferentists" are the *sensitive ones*—the religious "babies," who expect the church to be a kindergarten for their pleasure and the preacher a spiritual nurse-girl to coddle them and pet them. We might name many others who belong to the group. At any rate, the ratio is two-thirds of the whole. Are *you* in this group? blind to the conditions in our day? blind to the awfulness of modern sin? blind to the onslaught of modern apostasy? blind to the condition of lost souls?

God pity you if you are. Remember that Jesus says to you in the hour of crisis, "Sit down. Keep quiet. I cannot count on you. You are not dependable. You are sound asleep. You have no idea of the hour to which the world has come. Just keep quiet; that is the very most that I can expect of you."

II. NOW WE OBSERVE THE SECOND GROUP— THE "PARTIAL PRETENSIONISTS"

Matthew writes that the Lord said unto them, "Tarry ye here, and watch with me." Luke declares that Christ further cautioned them, "Rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."

This group known as the "Partial Pretensionists" consists of the inner circle of Christ's disciples — Peter, James and John. Twice before these men had been close

to Him in great experiences. On the Mount of Transfiguration, in the darkness of the night, the Saviour prayed and His face became as the sun and His raiment as white as the light, and Moses and Elijah came and discoursed with Him concerning His decease which He was to accomplish at Jerusalem. Peter, James and John were there to see the glory of this experience. On that day when the Lord manifested His resurrection power in the raising of Jairus' daughter, restoring the child to radiant life, these three alone of all the disciples saw the mighty miracle. They were the favored ones. Why? Not because God is any respecter of persons, but because they were closer to Christ in spirit.

Nevertheless, though these disciples belonged to the inner circle, they somehow failed Jesus in the hour of crisis. They were not so close to the Lord as He wanted them to be. When He was agonizing with God for power and strength to go to Calvary to bear the burden of a lost world, they too went to sleep. When our Lord had cried in agony, "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt," and then had come back to these three, we read that "he findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one hour? Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak."

CHRIST OUR KIN

Oh, the abject loneliness of the Son of God! See it clearly revealed here. How pathetic! See Jesus reaching out for the touch of earthly hands. Christ's craving for sympathy at this hour shows that He was truly a man, as well as God, that He is kin to all the race.

His child-cry "Abba," which is comparable to our word "papa," was motivated by the childlike desire for the touch of a hand upon His, as when a child who is afraid in the dark wants his mother to hold his hand after the light is put out. I have seen the sick do this. They have reached out feebly with wan hands, seeking for some loved one at the bedside to hold their hand as they suffered pain or fever. I have seen those approaching the dark valley of the shadow of death reach out a feeble hand in order that some dear one might go with them to the very edge of the valley. You know that there is power in the touch of a hand when it conveys sympathy. And our Lord proved that He was completely human in that He wanted His friends with Him in the dark hour. It is a terrible thing to be friendless in adversity. The Lord Jesus wanted someone near Him, someone to appreciate His hour, someone to have sympathy with Him.

I wish I could portray to you what must have been the tone of His voice when He came back to the boastful Peter and said, "What, Simon, sleepest thou? couldst not thou watch one hour?" *Angels came and ministered to Him, but He asked so piteously for His friends to stay by Him in that hour of trial.*

It is challenging to realize that we mean something to Christ. He means everything to us—but we also mean something to Him. Our Christ at this hour is looking for someone with whom He can share the burden of a lost world. He has always had the inner circle of those who have caught a vision of His power and have seen an unveiling of His glory as Peter, James and John did. Yet so many of us belong to this partially pretentious group. It may seem a little harsh of me to include these three disciples in this classification and

perhaps James and John should be exonerated; but certainly Peter belongs in this group, for you remember how he had declared that though all should forsake Christ, he would never forsake. He would go from prison to judgment, and to death, if necessary, for his Master. However, when it came to the test, the declaration was revealed to be pretense. In the hour of crisis Peter slept.

Listen, friends, do you belong to this group? Do you pretend a consecration that you do not possess? a faithfulness which deep down in your heart you know does not exist? Do you pretend a love which God knows is not there? Perhaps God has given you a place of privilege, and by His grace has shown you many mighty things. Because of the privileges God has granted you and because of the prominence He has permitted you to enjoy, many people think that you are deep spiritually and that you are living very close to God. But, are you awake in the crisis? Does God whisper to you? Does He make known His will? Or do you find the heavens brass above and the earth iron beneath your feet? Do you live in the shadows in the time of trial? Are you asleep while the world goes reeling on its way to judgment? Are you spiritually aware of the conditions in the day in which we live? Are your eyes open? Is your heart warm? Is your soul on fire for God?

GOD KNOWS OUR IMPERFECTIONS

God knows how easily we fail. Peter, James and John failed, and the Lord Jesus went into the shadow and agonized with God; when He came again He found them—the inner circle—sleeping. You know, the Church has very little to boast of concerning its rela-

tionship to God. Our righteousness is exceedingly imperfect. Our faithfulness and service are spasmodic and irregular. We are spiritual today and cold tomorrow. We serve Him one hour and shirk our tasks the next. "Couldst not thou watch one hour?" Why cannot we be faithful to our Lord for the brief hour of our lives? Why are we so spasmodic in our service? Why are our hearts a flame one day and an iceberg the next? Why cannot we consistently and conscientiously dedicate ourselves to the Lord Jesus and go down the pathway of life in uncompromising service for Him?

Many of us mean well; but we fail so miserably. During the Civil War, Lincoln mourned the fact that there were so many who were always vowing that they would shed their last drop of blood for the cause of the Union but were so few who would prepare to shed their first drop of blood for the nation. And such is human nature.

But thank God for this little group that provided for Christ a sense of nearness and sympathy in His trying hour. At least He expected something from them when He said, "Watch and pray." But their failure to approximate these expectations makes the tragedy the greater.

It does not seem to be a great tragedy, humanly speaking, when a nominal Christian backslides. But when someone who pretends to be something, who has had prominence in the kingdom and in the Church, goes backward and dishonors Christ's Name, there is tragedy! Every minister must pray constantly that the Lord will not permit him to be a castaway, for the ministry suffers many temptations and it is a fearful thing for the servant of God to lose his crown. I think often of the multitude whose eyes are upon me as a minister of

God and the occupant of a great pulpit. I pretend to be something and God helping me I *must* be something. I must be faithful. I must be true. My task is superhuman, and can only be accomplished by superhuman strength.

There is no tragedy like that which occurs when a minister of the Gospel steps out of the way and disgraces his calling, thereby causing a great shadow to fall upon the Church of Christ. It is a pitiful thing to see some other leader in the work of the Church go astray. It is sad to see a deacon, through failure of character in a crisis, step aside and dishonor God. It is a tragic thing to behold a leading woman in the Church retard, through sin and selfishness or touchiness, the progress of the work of the kingdom. It is disconcerting to see a leader of young people prove himself unworthy and untrue, or to see a missionary of the Cross step down from his high calling. *It is a terrible thing to be close to Jesus, to be in the inner circle, to pretend to be something, to have our Lord expect something of us in the hour of crisis, and then to fall short of His expectation.*

It is far better that we should never occupy the inner place than that we should fail the Lord. Oh, dear friends, let the Spirit of God search your hearts, as He searches mine. Are you a Pretensionist? Do you belong to this group? Have you failed Christ? Are you sleeping in the hour of crisis? Can you hear His tender, pleading voice ask, "Why sleepest thou? Couldst not thou watch one hour?"?

III. OBSERVE NOW THE LAST GROUP, JUDAS AND A
GREAT MULTITUDE WITH SWORDS AND STAVES—
THE "ANTAGONISTS"

After Christ had come for the third time to find this inner circle asleep, He said, "Sleep on now, and take your rest; it is enough, the hour is come: behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand. And immediately, while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. And he that betrayed him had given them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him, and lead him away safely. And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, Master, master; and kissed him. And they laid their hands on him, and took him."

Our Lord was betrayed by one of His own. He was delivered into the hands of His enemies by one who had lived with Him and had seen His mightiness; one who had shared in His power, for Judas must have at one time had power over demons. The Lord sent His disciples forth with that power, and they exercised it. Judas was one who had been fed from His blessed hand. He had listened to Christ's tender messages and had seen the manifestations of His deity. A disciple may most effectively betray his Lord. Outside enemies do Him little harm. It is those who are on the inside, the antagonistic ones in the fold, who most cause the Lord to suffer.

This picture has its modern counterpart. Judas is representative of apostate Christianity. Judas, the man who never really knew Jesus though he lived with Him,

who sought to sell our Lord and who literally sold himself, not Christ, approaches the Lord and says, "Master, master," and betrays Him with a kiss. A kiss is the symbol of friendliness and love. Dr. Scofield calls our attention to the fact that never once in the Gospel record does Judas Iscariot call Jesus "Lord." He was the first Modernist among Christ's professed followers. No one can say in reality that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Ghost, but it is possible to use the term as an empty formality without believing in His Lordship. The great term of the Modernists is not *Lord* but *Master*.

Godless Modernism is betraying Christ today, as Judas did of old, into the hands of His enemies. You say that this is an astounding statement. Yes, but true! The greatest enemy of the religion of Jesus Christ, the strongest foe of both Protestantism and Catholicism, is Communism. And it walks hand in hand and heart to heart with atheism.

COMMUNISTS LIKE THE MODERNISTS

It is a well-known fact that the Communists include many Modernist preachers among their friends and supporters. One of the reasons why Communism hates the Biblical Church is because the Biblical Church stands for *authority* in religion; and Communism decries authority. It longs to cut the head off the body politic and let the feet and legs go trampling virtue, decency and righteousness in the mire. Communism and atheism also hate the Fundamentalist Christian because he too believes in authoritative religion; he believes in the *authority of the Word of God*. But Communism is friendly toward our liberal preachers and churches, for it knows that they are preparing the way for irreligion, godlessness

and the coming of the Antichrist. Modernism destroys authority, creates moral looseness, and unwittingly encourages economic chaos. Those in the Church who deny the faith, who trample upon the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, who deny His deity, are, like Judas of old, betraying Jesus with a kiss. They are the antagonists of the faith.

And with these come a multitude of others. With Judas when he rudely broke in upon the praying Saviour in Gethsemane were the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. These are representative of those who have betrayed Christ with creed and cant; whose church services have been largely soft music and soft lights and "downsittings and uprisings," creed and ceremony, parade and candlelight and all the rest. These ritualists have not brought men to the feet of Jesus, that they might be saved by the power of the Cross!

The multitudes with swords and staves represent the many who during the centuries have been His enemies. We think of the Roman Empire and the French Revolution—and Nazified Germany with her paganism and Jew-hatred, which too often includes Jesus of Nazareth. We fear that other nations with their nationalist programs which demand the conformity of religion to the State, are also guilty of this onslaught upon Christ.

We have studied the three groups in Gethsemane's Garden. Each of us fits into one of the three, for they are undoubtedly representative and all-inclusive. I shall not attempt to place you in the group to which you belong. God knows exactly your condition and mine, and our relationship to Him. You yourself know where you stand this day.

LOOKING TO THE VICTORIOUS CHRIST

I cannot close this message without calling you to look upon the Lord Jesus Christ in Gethsemane's Garden. We must not approach the end of this study with a sense of defeat—and we shall feel defeated if we look at the three groups alone. We must look unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. Matthew says, "He went a little farther, and fell on his face." Praise God Jesus went a little farther! The eight disciples could go only a limited distance because of their spiritual condition. The favored three could go a little nearer, *but Jesus went all the way with God.*

I think that Gethsemane was the heart of the crisis for Jesus. There He fought the battle and won. We watch Him as He goes on His way to trial and to judgment, to scourging, and to death, as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, opening not His mouth, and we find the secret of it in His surrender in Gethsemane's Garden.

" 'Tis midnight, and on Olive's brow
The star is dimmed that lately shone.
'Tis midnight in the Garden now;
The suffering Saviour prays alone!
Gethsemane, Garden of tears,
What holy memories linger there;
Gethsemane, through all the years
Thou art echoing still the Saviour's prayer!"

How glad I am for Christ's perfect obedience in the Garden of Gethsemane! How thankful our hearts should be when we realize that He did not fail God, even though the others failed. How wonderful to know that it is this perfect Saviour who presents all of us faultless before the throne of His glory with exceeding joy. How

gracious to know that it is this obedient One who stands as our High Priest and Intercessor before God.

"Before the throne my Surety stands,
My name is written on His hands."

The awful agony of Gethsemane's Garden should challenge our souls because that agony makes possible peace for our souls. Luke tells us that "being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground"! My friends, our salvation is not a cheap thing. Oh, how can we live indifferent lives, careless lives, godless lives, in the presence of such a sacrifice?

How I thank God that in this modern world-tragedy Jesus will not fail. The world seems fast approaching the consummation of our age. We have apostasy in our church life, creating coldness and indifference among those who profess to be followers of the Lord Jesus. But our Lord will not fail! As the darkness deepens, we know the morning approaches and every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. He shall rule. He shall reign. He shall bring to pass that which is needful in this world of ours. The Christ of Gethsemane, the Christ of Calvary, the Christ of the Open Tomb, *shall be Victorious!*

JAMES B. CHAPMAN

Dr. J. B. Chapman is a General Superintendent of the Church of the Nazarene. He is the author of *Singing in the Shadows*, *Christ and the Bible*, etc.

CHAPTER II

V. good
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CHRIST AND THE BIBLE

"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39).

THE PEOPLE who gathered about Jesus understood Him to maintain that He was the Son of God in a sense in which others are not the sons of God. They understood His claim to be the highest possible claim, that of full and proper deity. Such an unusual declaration could not be accepted without unusual evidence, and Jesus offered His hearers this unusual evidence.

First, He offered them the testimony of John the Baptist. There were doubtless those standing by who had heard John preach and knew the grip of the words of that mighty prophet by personal experience. Those who had not heard John personally knew many who had heard him, and there was a universal conviction that John was a prophet sent from God. But the climax of John's ministry was not in his call to repentance. Nor was it in his demand that men should be baptized with water as evidence of their radical and permanent change of thought and conduct. Rather, the climax came that day when he pointed out Jesus to his disciples and cried, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" John was greater than all the prophets in that he lived to see his prophecies fulfilled, and to

himself initiate the Messiah into His office, and to furnish to Him His first disciples. So Jesus turned to John, and said to the people, "Ye believe John—but John spoke of Me!" John's testimony was so clear and equivocal that one could not hold to John and not also hold to Christ; and Jesus pointed out this fact to those who gathered about him.

In the second place, Jesus offered the testimony of His own miraculous works. Satan and wicked men can work "lying wonders," but true miracles must always be such as none but God can do, and they must be done for the purpose of "proving some messenger as divinely sent or some message as divinely given." Others have done miracles in another's name. But Jesus did His miracles to prove His claim that He was the Son of God, and His works testified that truly it was so. It was not necessary for Him either to point out one work or enumerate many. Those who gathered about Him knew too well the nature of the works which He performed to need further evidence on this point. The blind had been made to see. The deaf had been made to hear. Lepers had been cleansed, and even the dead had been raised to life. And all the time He was doing these mighty works He was telling the people that He was the Son of God, and that they must either deny His works or acknowledge His claims.

In the third place, He offered them the Father's own testimony. In the presence of the multitude that day when He was baptized of John, the Spirit in the form of a dove descended upon Him, and the Father's voice from heaven announced, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." These occurrences were so recent that they had not yet been disputed. But Jesus claimed this testimony to His deity and drove home

to the hearts of His hearers the fact that His high claims were substantiated by the highest authority.

And in the fourth place, Jesus offered the testimony of the Holy Scriptures in support of His high claims: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." The people who listened to Him that day had access to the Old Testament Scriptures and upon the truths found therein they based their hope of eternal life. But Jesus is so identified with the Scriptures that one must accept Him if he accepts the Scriptures, and He must reject the Scriptures if he rejects Christ. The two are inseparable. Christ is the Living Word; the Bible is the Written Word. Christ and the Bible complement each other as modes of revealing God to men, and they are always in perfect agreement. In the first chapter of John, which speaks of the Word which was with God and which was God, the reference is to Christ the Living Word, and not to the Bible. But of the Bible Jesus said, "The scripture cannot be broken." And so our theme is: "Christ and the Bible."

We have in the Bible the most remarkable Book in the world. It is so outstanding, in fact, that it is very properly called "*the* Book." And although, as in the days of Solomon, "of the making of books there is no end," yet the Bible is in a class altogether by itself, and men know what Book we mean when we speak of "*the* Book," just as they know what sun we mean when we say "*the* sun," even though there are millions of suns in the universe. In fact the Bible has been likened to the sun. An untutored woman sat reading her Bible when a learned skeptic came along and inquired, "What is that you are reading?" The woman answered, "It is the Word of God." "Who told you

it is the Word of God?" asked the skeptic. "God told me," answered the poor woman. "And how did God tell you that?" asked the learned one. The woman was quiet for a moment, and then, looking up toward the brilliant sun, she inquired, "What is that?" "It is the sun," the skeptic replied. But the woman asked, "Who told you it is the sun?" The skeptic answered, "No one need tell me it is the sun. It tells me itself. I know it is the sun for it gives me life and light and heat and happiness." And the woman said, "And that is how God told me this is His Word. It also gives me light and heat and happiness. It is its own witness."

Our Bible is divine, and yet it is very human. It reveals the thoughts of God in the language of men. Its truths are the most sublime, but its language is the simplest and fullest. It must possess these two qualities to be of use to us. If its language were the language of angels, we could not know its meaning; and if its truths were only such as relate to things material and transient, we would not be benefited. So, like our Lord, this Book combines the human and the divine in proper proportions to serve the purpose for which it was given.

This Bible is remarkable for both its variety and unity. As we have it here, there are two general divisions—the Old Testament and the New Testament. But these two are one. The New Testament is concealed in the Old Testament, and the Old Testament is revealed in the New Testament. The Old Testament is like the swelling bud: the New Testament is like the full-blown flower. Those who try to read the Old Testament without the New Testament read with a veil upon their eyes and hearts. Those who read the New Testament without reading the Old Testament are like those

who try to build a house without giving attention to the foundation. And the Bible is its own best commentary. To know all the Bible says on a subject is to know what it teaches concerning that subject. And there is much in the idea of the old Scotch woman who said concerning the commentary which her pastor gave her: "It is a difficult book for one so ignorant as I. But the blessed Book throws a great deal of light upon its meaning."

Inside the two Testaments are sixty-six divisions which we call "books." There are thirty-nine such divisions in the Old Testament, and twenty-seven in the New Testament. But it is no accident that these sixty-six books are bound under one cover, for they are, after all, but one Book. They are one in that they are all given by inspiration of God. They are one in that they have reference to the same end—the salvation of men. They all teach a common morality, a single way of salvation, and they all warn men of their responsibility to Almighty God both now and at the future Judgment. There are of necessity difficulties in the Bible, but there are no contradictions. The nature of the subject matter makes mystery inescapable; but the content is dependable, and whosoever will can find herein the road he should take.

Within the scope of this wonderful Book is virtually every form of literature known to man. There is the historical, as for example, the book of Genesis; the legislative, the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount; the biographical, the four Gospels; the poetic, the Psalms; wisdom literature, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes; drama, Job; the epistolary, the writings of Paul; and the apocalyptic, Daniel and Revelation. Within these books are parables, fables, metaphors, dreams,

allegories and about every other form which words and sentences take to make clear the thoughts and feelings from which they spring. It may be that some portions will not appeal to you, but be sure they will appeal to someone, and you will find something here that suits your temper and caliber.

All the Bible is inspired. We do not say that the Bible *contains* the Word of God. We say it *is* the Word of God. All the Bible is important. We do not say it is all of equal importance. It were folly to say that those chapters in First Chronicles which are filled with names difficult to pronounce are equal in value to John 3:16, which passage Martin Luther called the "Little Bible," and which he said would yet contain the message of salvation if all the rest of the Bible were destroyed. But while all parts are not of equal importance, all are of importance in the interest of a complete revelation. It is like the human body. No one would declare that his little finger is as important as his lungs, and yet the little finger is necessary if one is to have a body complete and without mutilation.

The Bible came to us through forty or fifty different human authors who lived during a period covering fourteen or fifteen hundred years. These men were from various walks of life, possessed a variety of capacities, and held a wide variety of positions. There were humble men like Amos, the gatherer of sycamore fruit, and kingly men like David and Solomon. There were priests like Ezekiel, and men of affairs like Nehemiah. There were untutored fishermen like Peter, and logicians and scholars like Paul. The centuries included within the scope of the Bible saw many changes in the standards of life and the customs of men; but when the products of these many minds and many centuries are brought to-

gether they constitute one consistent whole. All these things testify to the divine origin of this blessed Book. I think it was Hadley who suggested that if sixty-six men should meet at a given place, each man unaware that the others were coming, and each man should bring in his hand a piece of marble of a size and shape different from any of the others; and if when these pieces of marble were placed in a heap in a certain order they resulted in the forming of a beautiful and symmetrical pyramid, an intelligent observer would say, "You cannot fool me. There were many hands engaged in this work, but one mind planned it all. Otherwise there would not be this irrefutable evidence of design." But our Bible is even more remarkable than the illustration suggests, for its authors were men of differing ages and even of different nationalities, and yet when they all made their contribution the result was one Book. Now surely every intelligent person will say, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God."

The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek. In the course of time these languages ceased to be spoken by the people of the living nations, and so it has been necessary to translate the Bible into the languages which the people of today can understand. Either this work of translation had to be done or men had to be taught Hebrew and Greek, no matter what their mother tongue. And so the Bible, in the whole or in part, has been translated into more than a thousand languages and dialects. No other book has approached such a record. But the remarkable thing is that the essential message is maintained in all the forms in which the Bible has yet appeared.

During the last four hundred years many translations

and various versions have appeared in our English language. There are minor differences among them, but not a single fundamental doctrine or essential practice is affected, so that persons who want to find the way to God and heaven need not trouble themselves much about versions. Let them read it in any version: the Authorized, the English Revised, the American Revised, the Douay or Catholic, the New Testament in Modern Speech, Moffatt's translation—any of them; they are all good, and they all tell you everything you need to know to find the way to God and heaven. Read the Bible as literature, study it as a textbook, give attention to it for devotional purposes—any way you take it, it is good.

There is also the problem of understanding the Bible. There are difficult and obscure passages, of course, but all that is essential to salvation and life is clear and plain and definite. The scholars can help us with the hard places, but the best qualification for understanding the Bible is a willingness to obey it. I think the majority of us are like Mark Twain who said, "The parts of the Bible which I cannot understand do not trouble me much. I am troubled more by the parts I can understand." It does not matter much whether you or I ever get to where we can explain the pedigree of Melchizedek; the important thing is that we shall repent of our sins, be born again, and then walk in the light as God gives us to know what is right. And we do not have to be scholars to do these things.

Thank God for this wonderful Book! Let us join with that great company of men who have found here a gold mine inexhaustible, and have, like John Wesley, delighted to call themselves "men of one Book," mean-

ing that the Bible is an authoritative and dependable guide which requires neither revision nor supplement.

The saintly Whitehead once wrote: "The Bible contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its decisions are immutable. Read it to believe, believe it to be safe, practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's guide, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword and the Christian's charter. Here Paradise is restored, heaven opened and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. Read it slowly, daily, prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of pleasure. It is given you in life, will be opened at the Judgment and will be remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labor, and condemn all who trifle with its contents."

But the chief unity of the Bible grows out of the fact that it has but one hero—the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible mentions many men. But the men of the Bible are important only *in* their relationship to Jesus Christ. A long roster of names makes interesting reading because all the men in the list were progenitors of Jesus Christ, as to His humanity. Good men, great men and wise men were types of Jesus, and hence have become relatively important. Even bad men became known because of their contrast with the One who did no sin, "neither was guile found in his mouth." And if you read of a good man in the Bible and cannot make out just why his story is told, you will usually discover the

key by bringing the story to bear upon the Ideal Man who is the hero of the whole Book.

The Bible contains many descriptions of places and things. But places and things are important only in so far as they touch the life of Jesus Christ. Bethlehem is the best known city in the world because Jesus was born there. Jerusalem can never be forgotten because Jesus died there. The Tabernacle and the Temple are interesting to the minutest detail because they speak of Jesus and His work for the salvation of men. The Bible is simply a Book about Jesus. Jesus is the subject of its history and prophecy. He is the antitype of its types. If you find something in the Bible that seems to be a very good thing and you do not know what it means, simply assume that it represents Christ, and you will not be wrong one time in a hundred.

And what is said of the Bible in general can be said of every book in particular. Christ is the subject of them all. In Genesis Jesus is the "seed of the woman" that bruised the serpent's head. In Exodus He is the Paschal Lamb whose blood upon the lintels and the doorposts caused the destroying angel to "pass over." In Leviticus He is the Great High Priest whose intercessions are accepted for all who believe. In Numbers He is the guiding Pillar of cloud and fire on the way to our Promised Land. In Deuteronomy He is the "prophet like unto Moses" who shall teach His people and guide them unerringly. In Joshua He is "the man with the drawn sword" come to command the hosts of the Lord and to lead them on to victory. He is the supreme and just Judge in the book of Judges. He is the model Husband (the *Ishi* of the Church) in the book of Ruth. He is the unerring Seer in the books of Samuel, the faultless King in the books of Kings, the unfailing

Sovereign in the books of Chronicles, the pattern Preacher in Ezra, the Restorer of the waste places in Nehemiah, and the Deliverer of the nation in the book of Esther. In Job He is Lord of the Resurrection and the Daysman or Umpire who will give us just consideration in the game of life. In the Psalms He is the Good Shepherd, the Shield and Buckler, and the Fortress and Strong Tower. He is the personification of wisdom in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, and the Ideal Lover in the Song of Solomon. In Isaiah He is the Child born, the Son given, the Wonderful Counselor, the Suffering Saviour and the Prince of Peace. He is the Balm of Gilead and the Great Physician of Jeremiah, the Only Hope in the book of Lamentations, the Reviver of dry bones in Ezekiel, and in the book of Daniel He is the Stone cut out of the mountain without hands which shall destroy all the kingdoms of the earth and itself fill all the earth.

In the Minor Prophets, Jesus is the Redeemer of the unworthy in Hosea, the Outpourer of the full measure of the Spirit in Joel, and the Giver of abundant harvests in Amos. In Obadiah He is the Enlarger of Israel's inheritance. In Jonah He is the Merciful Ruler. In Micah He is the Gatherer of the nations to Zion. In Nahum He is the Healer of bruises. In Habakkuk He is the Inheritance that remains when the fig tree fails to bloom, and all earthly supplies are cut off. He is the Author of Israel's son in Zephaniah, the Beautifier of the new Temple in Haggai, the Opener of the cleansing fountain in Zechariah, and the Purifier of the sons of Levi in Malachi.

In the New Testament, Jesus appears as the Messiah of the Jews in Matthew, the peerless World Worker in Mark, the Son of Man in Luke, and the Son of God

in John. He is the Baptizer with the Holy Ghost in the Acts, the Author of the law of life in Romans, the Head of the Church in Corinthians, the Giver of free salvation in Galatians, the Eternal Author of holiness in Ephesians, and the highest Goal for time and eternity in Philippians. He is the Indwelling Christ in Colossians, the Lord of the Second Advent in First and Second Thessalonians, the Ideal Pastor in Timothy and Titus, and the Friend of the friendless in Philemon. In Hebrews Jesus is the antitype of all types—the Head of all creation, higher than the angels, and yet lower than angels in that He tasted death for every man. His blood takes the place of the blood of all beasts and birds that ever died on Jewish altars, and through the rent veil of His smitten body He makes a way for us to enter into the inner sanctum sanctorum where God Himself sits upon the throne of His glory. In James, Jesus is the pattern for practical living. In the epistles of Peter, Christ's is the voice of thunder. In John, Jesus is the personification of love. In Jude He is the God of lightning. In Revelation, Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega.

Christ is the Second Adam as Head of the new creation. He is a Prophet whose words never fail. He is a Priest after the order of Melchizedek whose everlasting priesthood enables Him to save to the uttermost all who come to God by Him. He is a King who shall sit upon the throne of His father David and rule from the rivers unto the ends of the earth. He is the Companion of the Everlasting Father and the ever blessed Spirit, and is Himself the Second Person in the adorable Trinity.

In the imagery of this blessed Bible Jesus Christ is the Answer to every need. To the hungry He is Bread. To the thirsty He is Water. To the sick He is Physician

and Healing Balm. To the accused He is Advocate at court. To the condemned He brings pardon, and He opens the prison to those who are already incarcerated. To those whose lives are wasted He gives beauty for ashes. He is the Rose of Sharon for beauty, the Lily of the Valley for purity, the Morning Star for hope, the Lamb of God for atonement, and is a Great Rock in a weary land and "a shelter in the time of storm." He is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah for power, and as such He breaks every chain and gives us the victory again and again. He is Money to the poor, Wisdom to the ignorant, and Holiness to the defiled. And if there be a prayer for which no fitting word can be found, then He is the Answer to that prayer also, for He is "the desire of all nations."

When Jesus was here in the flesh He never met His match, although He was challenged at every step. Denied a place in the palace, He was born a King in a stable. Refused the adoration of sages, He was worshiped by shepherds. Since no Levites came to chant, angels sang His Christmas carol. The great did not apply for tuition in His school, and so He chose humble fishermen and despised taxgatherers to be His disciples.

Because He was Himself a miracle, the normal atmosphere of His life was friendly to miracles. People came to ask Him to do the impossible. After admitting it to be impossible, they went right on and asked Him to do it.

When taxes came due and the purse was empty, the first fish taken at the Master's command furnished money for double taxes. When ten thousand people came to Him in the desert He fed them all without opening a fish market or founding a bakery. Ten lepers were healed by the word of His power—all in a group.

Maimed, halt, blind, leprous, palsied—all were alike to Him. He healed them all. When the boat went away and left Him, He made a pavement of the sea, and reached His destination on time. When the restless waves would flood the ship in which He journeyed, He calmed them as a mother might put her feverish child to sleep. He broke up the only funeral He ever attended by restoring the dead youth alive to his mother. "It is fortunate," says D. L. Moody, "that He called the name of Lazarus that day when He said, 'Come forth,' for otherwise all the dead would have come at His invitation, as they will yet sometime do."

His whole life was vicarious and substitutionary. He came down to our world that we might go up to His world. He was born in a stable and cradled in a manger that He might lift us up to God. He was despised and rejected of men that we might be accepted of God and admired by angels forevermore. He walked the dirt roads of our world that we might walk the golden streets of heaven. He bore a cross that we might wear a crown. He drank vinegar mingled with gall that we might drink the water of life. He wore a crown of thorns that we might wear a crown of life. He was with the wicked in His death that we might be with the righteous in everlasting life. He was lifted up upon a cross that we might be lifted up upon a throne. He went down into the grave that we might come up out of the grave in the glory of His resurrection. He took our place on earth that we might share His place in heaven forever.

O blessed Christ, Thou hast won my heart. I fall at Thy feet in adoration. I worship Thee. I praise and glorify Thee. I ask no portion except the privilege of sitting at Thy feet. In Thy presence there is fullness

of joy, and at Thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore.

This blessed Book, the Bible, I clasp to my heart. I accept it as my waybill to duty and to glory. I believe its promises. I rest upon its assurances. I promise to obey its precepts. It is God's Book, and, by His grace, it is my Book too.

And the Christ of whom this Bible testifies I take as my Saviour. I receive Him into my heart. I dedicate to Him my life, my all. I praise Him that He does now receive me, and through His blood I am pardoned and cleansed from sin. In life He is my Pattern. In death He shall be my Assurance. In heaven I ask for nothing more than to see His face and to sit at His feet. Blessed Book! Glorious Christ! My soul doth magnify God my Saviour. In Him I shall abide forevermore.

CLOVIS G. CHAPPELL

Dr. Clovis G. Chappell is pastor of the Galloway Memorial Methodist Church, Jackson, Mississippi. He has a great evangelistic ministry in churches in all parts of the country.

Dr. Chappel is the author of a host of books including *Road to Certainty*, *Ten Rules for Christian Living*, *Sermons on the Lord's Prayer*, and *Values That Last*.

CHAPTER III

A NEW SONG*

"He hath put a new song in my mouth" (Psalm 40:3).

HERE IS A WORD to interest the most listless. However drowsy we are, this text ought to rouse us into eager wakefulness. However hopeless we are, it ought to startle us into glad expectation. It is a word that is needed in every age. It is especially needed by the jaded generation of which we are a part.

Life has grown old for many of us. In spite of all our facilities for thrills, we are finding the business of living rather stale and unexciting. "What has been will be, and there is no new thing under the sun," said a tired and bored cynic many years ago. To this pessimistic declaration many of us are ready to give a hearty "Amen." Instead of finding new songs we have found old yawns. Or if there has been any music at all, too often it has been a jarring jazz that has left us the more weary and disillusioned. But here is one who has discovered a new song. Life for him is not in the sear

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and yellow leaf; it is in the full flush of spring. He has therefore a story to tell that we greatly need to hear.

I

What is the source of this new song? From what fountain of inspiration does it flow?

This song is not a child of chance. No more is it a creature of circumstances. It is not merely a song of youth, for instance. There is nothing to indicate that this poet is singing simply because he is brushing the dewy flowers of life's morning. Even though such were the case, we know well enough that youth cannot always be depended upon to be an inspirer of song. Sometimes youth sings, but very often it does not. Many of our youth today seem to find life quite as drab and insipid as those of us who are in middle life, or as those who are nearing the sunset. In fact, some of the most weary and listless souls that I meet are young men and women who have not yet left their twenties. Some even seem thoroughly "fed up" on life who are on the springtime side of twenty. Therefore, to look to youth as a sure inspiration of song is to look to a source that is thoroughly unreliable.

No more does this song have its rise in the hills of prosperity and worldly success. There is no slightest hint, in the first place, that this poet had found either fame or fortune. Nor is there anywhere proof that the prosperous are more songful than the failures. Some years ago I was entertained in the home of a man whose wealth amounted to many millions. During the afternoon the husband and wife took me for a drive over the city. When we came back, as we were getting out of the car, in spite of the fact that company was present,

the wife burst into tears. She was a woman of an assured place in society. She seemed to possess all that heart could wish. She lived in a palace, yet, as I have thought of that home in after years, I have thought of it not so much as a place of songs as a place of sobs. We can safely say, therefore, that the song of the Psalmist is not born of circumstances. No abiding song ever is.

Neither is he singing because he is possessed of a rugged determination. There are times that we sing from a sense of duty. We feel that for the sake of others it is the helpful thing to do, and in this we are right. There is something finely heroic about the man who refuses to parade his sorrow, but rather locks it all in his heart and smiles on the world. It requires a high type of courage to keep a song upon the lips while there is a sob in the heart. Yet there are those big and brave enough for this taxing task. This was a practice that we urged with great enthusiasm during the stressful days of the World War. We sang lustily, "Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag, and smile, smile, smile." And some of us did it, though the smile sometimes changed into a grimace the moment we were alone.

That is an appealing picture that Moore gives of the young woman who loved the Irish patriot, Robert Emmet. Emmet, as you know, was executed in his early manhood for his too great zeal for his native land. But he died like a hero, and the girl who loved him tried hard to show herself as courageous in the bearing of her sorrow as he had been in the laying down of his life. The task, however, was too heavy for her. She went away to Italy to recover her failing health. There, in spite of all her heroic efforts, she faded like a flower.

"She is far from the land where her young hero sleeps,
And lovers around her are sighing;
But sadly she turns from their gaze and weeps,
For her heart in the grave is lying.

"She sings the wild songs of her dear native plains,
Every note that he loved awaking;
Ah! little they think who delight in her strains
How the heart of the minstrel is breaking.

"He had lived for his love, for his country he died,
They were all that to life had entwined him;
Nor soon shall the tears of his country be dried,
Nor long shall his love stay behind him.

"Oh! make her a home where the sunbeams rest,
When they promise a glorious tomorrow;
They'll shine o'er her sleep like a smile from the west,
From her own loved island of sorrow."

She sang, but while her song concealed her broken heart it did not heal it. This new song of the Psalmist is born of something even finer than a heroic determination.

What, then, is the source of his song? It is a gift of God. "He hath put a new song in my mouth," declares this poet joyously. Then his song has a fountain source that is abiding. His music need never be hushed into silence nor changed into discord. On the farm where I lived as a boy there is one of the loveliest springs that ever sang its way out of the hills. We call it the Basin Spring. "The trees fold their green arms around it, trees a century old, and the winds go whispering through them and the sunbeams drop their gold." The waters of this spring used to flow over a large flat rock. But one day hands that have probably been dust for centuries chiseled a basin upon the face of this rock. That basin, even in times of severest drought, is always

filled to overflowing because it has water constantly flowing into it from an unfailing reservoir among the great hills. And so it is with the music of this joyous singer. His song is born of the inexhaustible resources that are locked in the heart of God.

II

What is the nature of this poet's song?

1. His is a song of deliverance. "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay." How he ever got into this pit we are not told. He may have plunged into it through some great and devastating calamity. He may have fallen into it through his own wilfulness or carelessness or spiritual stupidity. But regardless of how he had come to be there, there he was, and there was no shutting his eyes to his tragic situation. He could never forget the stark horror of it all. The place was dark and cold. It was unspeakably lonely and as silent as death itself. And that which brought his awful plight to the very climax of hopelessness and despair was that he could find no solid resting place for his feet. For this pit did not have firm masonry for its floor. It did not even have water. It only had stenchful mire that gripped him with tenacious fingers and slowly dragged him into a ghastly grave.

It is Victor Hugo, I think, who tells the story of a man caught in the quicksand. One moment this man is walking in safety. Then his path begins to cling to his feet a bit. A few more steps and he is bogged down to his knees. He then begins to struggle frantically. But the more he struggles, the deeper he sinks. Soor the treacherous sand has reached his waist. By this time the unfortunate victim has become desperate. He now realizes that he is being slowly swallowed by a

hideous, blind mouth that is absolutely without mercy. He cries for help, but there is no response. He looks at the clouds floating in the blue and the birds as they soar above his head, and they seem to mock him. He prays, he shrieks, he curses. He struggles with every ounce of his energy, but the implacable mouth still swallows him only the faster. At last his final wild wail ends in a gulp. The cruel sand has filled his mouth, and the futile struggle is over.

The singer tells us that he was like this man, that he, too, was sinking and was horribly sure that all was over, that he, too, cried desperately for help. But here he has a different story to tell. There was One who answered his cry. He stretched up a helpless hand, and that hand was seized by One who was mighty, and he felt himself lifted to safety. Since then he has had a song upon his lips. It is a song of deliverance. Some of us can join him in the singing of it, for such a song befits the lips of every man who has greatly sinned and who has been greatly saved. Such a song is even more fitting for the lips of those who, through being reared in Christian homes and through the guidance of Christian parents, have been spared the agony of falling into the horrible pit out of which this poet had to be rescued, at exceedingly great cost both to himself and to his Lord.

2. Then this song of the poet is a song of security. "He (hath) set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings." This marvelously delivered man walks to-day with an assured confidence. His confidence, however, is not born of his faith in himself, but of his faith in God. It is God who has enabled him to say with the prophet, "He maketh my feet like hinds' feet." He has given him a bracing sense of security. He has made it possible for him to sing with the author of the twenty-

third Psalm, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." His footing is firm and secure. He does not look to tomorrow with feverish fear as he once did. The old horror is gone, and he can now look ahead with quiet eyes, knowing that the God who keeps him today will be sufficient for him tomorrow.

3. This song is also a song of gratitude. In the consciousness of the deliverance and security that God in his goodness had given him he could not withhold his praise. He burst into song as naturally as the bird that "lets his illumined being o'errun with the deluge of summer it receives." We are not so grateful as we ought to be, any of us. One day Jesus healed ten lepers. Having been healed, nine of them hurried upon their separate ways, utterly forgetful of the Healer. Only one came back with a song of praise upon his lips. Too often we join the nine. Too rarely we join the one. The Psalmist is among those who came back. His is a song of thanksgiving.

4. Finally, this song is winsomely and fascinatingly new. Its newness, however, is not born of the fact that this singer is saying something that has never been said before. It is not a bizarre song; it is a new song. I am glad that this is so. There is no real virtue, however, in mere novelty. Neither new songs nor new gospels are needed, if by "new" we mean only the unusual and the novel. I recently heard a wise preacher say to a group of theological graduates: "My young friends, when you begin to preach and one comes forward at the close of the service to say to you, 'That was a new thought you gave me today, I never thought of that before,' don't be too elated over it. The chances are that he will never think of it again." This song is new,

not because it is merely queer, but because it is born of experiences that are new and vital to the singer.

Yesterday a hearse passed you on the street. You only gave it a brief glance. A hearse is such a common sight. Yet to some who followed, that journey to the cemetery was as new and poignant as if they were the first who had ever been called upon to bury their dead out of their sight. The other day I heard a young mother talking to her first baby. She was saying the same sweet, ungrammatical nothings that generations of mothers have said. Yet they were fascinatingly new and lovely. They were born of experience. And here is a man and a maiden who have come to love each other. In their own ears how amazingly new and startling are the things they say. Yet they have been said over and over again countless millions of times. Recently a mother found an old letter that was so sentimental that she told her daughter frankly she was ashamed of her for writing such a letter. But when the daughter looked it over she found to her delight it was not her letter at all, but her mother's. Love talks the same language through the centuries, but it is always fascinatingly new.

Jesus said: "Every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." That is what the Psalmist is doing. That is what we can do. If we have a fresh, vital experience of God, our song will be as new and fresh as the first rose of June, yet as old as the ordered coming of the seasons. It will be as new as the first smile that dimples the cheek of the mother's first baby boy, yet it will be as old as motherhood. That was an old sky into which Shelley's skylark flew, but the bird looked at it as if

his were the first eyes that had ever seen it, and as he looked he sang a song so new that the poet had to exclaim—

“Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then—
As I am listening now.”

Just so long as we are making new discoveries in God, so long will our song be enchantingly new.

III

Now what is the good of this new song? Why should we covet it ourselves?

1. It is an unspeakable benediction to him who possesses it. Song means joy, laughter, gladness. Our present-day religion is a bit short on joy. Therefore it is short on power. “The joy of the Lord is your strength.” It is a source of strength in our hours of bereavement. It is a source of strength when our dreams fail to come true. It is a steady staff upon which to lean when the rain is on the roof and the light has gone out of the skies. It is a strong anchor when the fierce tempest toys with our bark and “sorrow sits sobbing like a troubled ghost in every chamber of the heart.”

Then it is a source of strength in our times of temptation. There are those who, in some measure, can resist the downward tug through sheer force of will. There are others who may be able to get past the death-haunted shores where the sirens sing by the poor expedient of stuffing wool into their ears. But the method of Ulysses was far better. He took on board with him

one whose song was so much more winsome than that of the sirens that the music of those death-dealing creatures lost its spell. This is a sure way of victory for ourselves. The most luring songs that the world can sing will lose their spell and become mere jarring discord if we have singing in our hearts the new song of the Psalmist.

2. This new song is not only a benediction to the singer, but to his fellows as well. "Many shall see it," sings our poet, "and fear, and shall trust in the Lord." "Many shall see it." Does not the poet use the wrong word? Should he not have said, "Many shall hear it"? Who sees a song? Yet so it is written. And you doubtless recall the wise conclusion that John Milton reached when, as a lad, he dreamed of writing a poem that the world would not willingly let die. He declared that he who would write a great poem must himself be a poem. And our singer has attained in some measure the high standard set by Milton. With this new song upon his lips that is but an echo of the song within his heart, he has himself become a song. There is a winsomeness and charm about his life that may be seen as well as heard. He is so in tune with the Infinite that those whose lives he touches cannot resist his spell. They yearn to know his secret, and, knowing it, they, too, come to trust in the Lord.

We who profess to be Christians are often dreadfully short on winsomeness. We read of some of the early saints that great grace was upon them; that is, they were gracious, fascinating, appealing. To associate with them was to become keen and eager to find what they had found. But when the Pharisee had finished thanking God that he was not as other men, I wonder who followed him home to ask him about the deep things of

the soul. I wonder who went to him to inquire wistfully how they, too, might separate themselves from the unwashed crowd of "extortioners, unjust, adulterers" and become faultless and unstained like himself. I wonder what man came with eager step and with an impassioned appeal that would take no denial to learn how he might rise to the sublime height of fasting twice a week. You know. No man came. And it was not because this Pharisee was not religious. It was rather because he was horribly religious. He was not in tune with God, and there was no wooing harmony in his life.

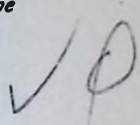
Ole Bull, you remember, had a friend, Leif Ericson by name, who averred that he had no ear for music. The fact that the violin of his fellow countryman had an angel choir hidden within it mattered nothing to him. The fact that Ole Bull could change his bow into a magic wand and make tempests crash and thunder, or birds sing, or brooks leap and prattle as songfully as the laughter of a happy child, did not interest Leif Ericson in the least. He even refused to go and hear Ole Bull play. But the great violinist won him in the end. How did he go about it? He did not crash his violin over his friend's head. He did not lecture him. He did not give him a scathing description of the man who is not moved by concord of sweet sounds. He went to where Leif was working and played for him—played with all the power of his compelling genius. And what was the result? It is easy to guess. Leif's heart became warm, his face softened, and his eyes grew big with tears. And then and there the soul of this scientist and inventor was taken captive by the charm of music.

It is even so that this singer of the new song seeks to take captive the hearts of men. He knows that we are not going to win the world by our wails. We are

not going to win by our complaints. We are not going to win by persistently prating about what is wrong with the Church. We are not going to win by proclaiming what a distressingly hard time we are having as we try to serve the Lord. We are not going to win by discordant lives that clash like violins played out of tune. *But we can win through the appealing winsomeness of lives in tune with the Christ.* If there is a harmony about our lives that the world cannot give and cannot take away, somebody is going to ask the secret. We are very short on inner music. We are sadly lacking in freshness and newness. If we show the way to the new song by the beauty and charm of our lives, "many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord."

DAVID M. DAWSON

Dr. David M. Dawson is pastor of the First Baptist Church, San Jose, Calif. He is the author of *More Power in Prayer, More Power to the Church* and *More Power in Soul-Winning*.



CHAPTER IV

THE DOUBLE PORTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

"I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me" (II Kings 2:9).

THE EVENTS which we are to consider are contained in II Kings, chapter two.

You probably remember the circumstances under which the request which forms our text was made. Elijah was about to be taken up to glory and Elisha was to be his successor in the prophetic office. There is beautiful symbolism in the chapter which we are to consider—Elijah typifying Jesus Christ, who has gone to glory, and Elisha representing the Christian, who is left to carry on the work which our Saviour started.

Our text was Elisha's answer to Elijah's question, "What do you want me to give you?" The young man might have asked for riches or honors and I believe Elijah would have given him his request. But he did not. "I want a double portion of thy spirit upon me," he said. What a blessed desire, a double portion of the spirit of the man who was going to glory!

First, I want you to notice that Elijah did not give to Elisha the privilege of asking what he desired until certain things had transpired in Elisha's life which are recorded earlier in the chapter.

In verse two Elijah told Elisha that he was going

to Bethel, and Elisha replied, "As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee." *So they went down to Bethel.* Here was a man who was willing to go all the way with his leader. When a Christian is willing to go all the way with his Leader, Jesus Christ, he is on the highway to success in the Christian life. Are you ready to say that today?

What was Bethel? If you read Genesis twenty-eight you will find that Jacob arrived at Bethel one night, and had a stone for a pillow, and no one to whom he could say "goodnight"; he was absolutely friendless! And that night he met God. Sometimes we have to sink down—far down—before we listen to God! Until then Jacob had been living as a schemer, getting hold of his brother's birthright and fooling his blind father. Some Christians try to "get by" in their Christian lives through concealing their true selves behind a thin veneer. God knows us by our character, and not by our reputation! That night Jacob became humbly helpless; he built a penitent's prayer ladder, and the angels ascended and descended and gave him companionship. It was when Jacob became utterly helpless that God came to his rescue.

You cannot have God's best until you come out in the open and place your entire dependence not on your trickery but on the true and living God. A spirit of self-sufficiency will keep us from the sense of need of the Holy Spirit's power.

Secondly, in verse four, Elijah said to Elisha, "The Lord has sent me to Jericho," and again Elisha said, "As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee." *So they came to Jericho.* He was willing to go all the way! Blessed resolution! What was Jericho? A beautiful but sinful city. You never can get

very far with God until you have settled the sin question. Sin isn't for the Christian! Everyone whom God is going to use has to settle the sin question. God will not compromise with it! He will not serve the Water of Life in a dirty cup! We must go to Jericho, and in the midst of sin, keep ourselves clean! And only the Holy Spirit can help us to do this.

Then Elijah said, "The Lord hath sent me to Jordan" (verse six), and again Elisha said, "As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee." *And they two went on.* Isn't that grand! Listen to him—"I don't care where the Lord leads me, I'll even go to Jordan." The most significant thing that happened in Jordan was the baptism-burial of Jesus. So Jordan to me is a type of death! Happy is the day when the Christian can say, "I am ready to die for my Lord"—die to our old lives, die to everything that would take us away from the one great passion of our lives. Listen to grand old Paul: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). God never uses us until we have gone in the flesh to Jordan and have been raised in spiritual resurrection glory!

There we have a picture of a man who was willing to go all the way with the man who was going to glory.

Ah, it was then that Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee" (verse nine), and it is here that we find our illuminating text, "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me."

Happy indeed is the Christian who sees that his greatest need is the Spirit of the Man who has gone to

glory—the Holy Spirit! Would that every Christian would see this need, for then a new day of dynamic power and victory would dawn for the Church of Jesus Christ for our Greater Elijah said, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (Acts 1:8). He would do for us what neither human energy nor denomination nor church machinery can accomplish! The need of every Christian is to have the Holy Spirit's power, for then you have the Omnipotence of God!

Elisha not only asked for the Spirit, but a double portion of the Spirit! Wise man! He wanted balance, and our God is the Author of balance—He gave us two eyes, ears, arms and legs that we might be properly balanced, and He gave the bird two wings lest it should lack balance. Airplanes do not fly with one wing, but if one wing is discarded a nose dive and wreckage are the results. The unbalanced world of today is an example; we tried to fly with one wing of materialism and discarded the spiritual wing. The world will ascend again if we put on the spiritual wing! May God give us sense to do it!

It was Thomas Edison who wisely said soon after the 1929 crash: "I am convinced that if there is a God, He will not permit us to progress much further in material things until we catch up spiritually; a law of the universe is that all things must be kept in balance or disorder prevails." May the God of heaven help us in our unbalanced madness!

The Christian needs the double portion of the Spirit—the portion for his life (so that he may live a holy and triumphant life) and the portion for his work (that he may be bold and mighty). We would not attempt to divide the Holy Spirit but He must fill both

divisions of our lives if we are to be powerfully balanced Christians! Too many get only the Spirit *in* them, and not *on* them, or the Spirit *on* them and not *in* them, and sooner or later they crash. God intends that my life shall back up my work and my work shall back up my life! "I pray Thee, let a double portion of Thy Spirit be upon me." Say it, beloved, say it, and if you are willing to go "all the way" His mantle will fall on you!

Now, in closing, let me draw your attention to three incidents which followed the granting of the double portion. In verse 14 he took his new-found mantle and smote the waters (waters are a symbol of people). Ah, he had power with people. And that's what God's witnesses need—"There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life" (Joshua 1:5). *Power*—that is what the balance of the Holy Spirit gives.

Then, verse fifteen tells us that the sons of the prophets in blind unbelief railed against Elisha but he successfully withstood them, and kept his faith in the man who had gone to glory. Beloved, you'll need the Spirit, yea, a double portion of the Holy Spirit, to meet an unbelieving world which is bent on your destruction and defeat.

Lastly, you will notice that the young folk ridiculed him and his beliefs. "Go up, thou bald head; go up" (verse 23), but unheeding the scoffings and sneerings, like the Bible-loving, "old-fashioned," Spirit-filled and Spirit-led children of God today, he went forward triumphantly, wearing the mantle of the man who had gone to glory!

Lord, not for riches nor fame would we petition Thee, but above everything else, "I pray Thee, let a double portion of Thy Spirit be upon me."

R. E. GOLLADAY

Dr. R. E. Golladay is pastor of the Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Baltimore, Maryland. He is the author of *The Cross Athwart the Sky, Life Forever, Earth's Song of Redemption*, etc.

CHAPTER V

SPIRITUAL GIFTS, TRANSIENT AND PERMANENT

"Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity" (I Cor. 13:8, 13).

CORINTH, with its wealth, its intellectualism, and its appalling wickedness, was a field which afforded full scope to the superlative missionary genius of St. Paul.

In his work, St. Paul, according to his own express declaration, could become "all things to all men." To the Athenians he could quote the Greek classics. To the Roman officials he could quote the statutes of their legal code. But when he came to Corinth he resolved to lay all this aside. He could say, in after days, 'I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.' And in the conflict which ensued, the Cross, stern and forbidding in itself, an object of scorn, but consecrated by the blood of Jesus and refulgent with the unspeakable love of God, won the day. By the simple preaching of the Cross, with its story of love and of blood, the ramparts of pride were battered down, prejudices were dissipated, stony hearts were melted, and a congregation of God's

people was gathered together. This First Epistle to the Corinthians is a letter of reproof and advice, written by St. Paul, in later times, to these spiritual children which he had brought forth in the travail of his own soul.

This Epistle is one of the best pictures we have of an Apostolic Church, with its hopes, its aspirations, its struggles, its imperfect conception of truth, its weaknesses, its failures. It sets before us the Spirit of God working, through the Gospel, with the imperfections of men, in the effort to recreate these men in the image of God.

This thirteenth chapter is the continuation, and the climax, of that division of the Epistle in which the Apostle treats specifically of spiritual gifts, embracing Christian life and Christian service. For our further consideration, then, let us take as our subject: "SPIRITUAL GIFTS, TRANSIENT AND PERMANENT," in other words, the gifts which are for time and service only, and those which become part of man's character, his life, and endure for eternity.

I. THE GIFTS WHICH ARE TRANSIENT

I confess there was a time when I dreamed of an Apostolic Church which was well-nigh spotless; which, as a Church, was in constant readiness for Elijah's chariot of fire. But fuller knowledge has dispelled this illusion, and with its passing there have come clearer visions of the depths of human depravity, of the greatness of God's love, and of the power of divine grace.

The congregations in Rome, in Ephesus, in Corinth, were made up of men and women taken from the common humanity of which we are part. When they rose to higher things it was only because they were

clinging to the hand of the one great Helper of humanity—Jesus, the Saviour of men. When they rose it was in spite of the clogs, inherent and adherent, which weigh down, so close to the earth, even the redeemed and justified children of God.

True, some of those people did enjoy privileges, and possess powers not granted us. They had teachers directly inspired of God, some of whom had seen the Lord Jesus. And some of those people were themselves endowed with powers of speech, of spiritual insight, of doing works, not vouchsafed to us. On the other hand, though we have not the teachers, we have the teachings, inspired of God. And if we do not have the special gifts some of those people possessed, because the need for them no longer exists, we have our blessings which fully compensate us for their loss. The devout, intelligent student of the development of God's kingdom is privileged to behold Jesus of Nazareth walking the earth in statelier, more glorious form than was ever granted to those who saw Him in the flesh, with the eyes of flesh, save, perhaps, on the Mount of Transfiguration and Olivet. He is to be seen thus in His Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.

At any rate, there were sad derelictions in the Corinthian Church. There were members who came to the Holy Supper in a state of intoxication. Others were inclined to put such a perverted interpretation on the law of liberty that thereby liberty was turned into license. And even among those endowed with those special gifts there was vanity, self-seeking, godless rivalries, and bitter contention.

Those people had lost sight of the important truth that these gifts were not personal prizes for individual

aggrandizement; but gifts to be used as instruments for the good of the common body—the Church.

To call these people to their senses, the Apostle reminds them of the pit from which they have been digged. He tells them the purpose for which these gifts have been given and the spirit in which they are to be used. And as the final argument against this spirit of pride and self-glorification, engendered by the possession of those gifts, the Apostle tells his hearers that they are but temporary, that, having accomplished their purpose, they will fail.

"My children!" the Apostle would say, "why do you forget your holy calling? Why this godless pride, coming from the possession of God-given gifts? 'What hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?' Why this bitterness of spirit where loving service should prevail? Do you not know that you are all members of one body? and that each member best serves itself by serving well the body? Do you not know that each member is a partaker of the honor bestowed on the common body? and that, conversely, the whole body participates in the praise which the individual member receives? Why have you set your hearts on the mere instruments of service, which, however useful, are to perish when the purpose of their bestowal has been accomplished?"

"Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail." The prophet stands as the mouthpiece of God. Whether he bring revelations of truth hitherto unknown, or whether he expound truths already known in a general or superficial manner, thus bringing out deeper truths and applying them to the needs of men, his office is an important one. Through it the unbeliever is to be won. Through

it the believer is to be built up. The office of the prophet is to bring the mind and heart of man into closer touch with the mind and heart of God. But important as has been this office, important as it is yet to be in unfolding the kingdom of God on earth, it shall have an end. Indeed, in one signification, that of revealing truth, it has come to an end. And in the signification of the teaching office it shall end also when the present dispensation shall come to an end, the Church Militant become the Church Triumphant, and all be taught of God.

"Whether there be tongues, they shall cease." There is room for questioning whether the gift of tongues in this place means the ability to speak languages not learned by the ordinary method of acquisition, as was evidently the case on the Day of Pentecost, and as many expositors, especially in former days, believed was the meaning in this instance, or whether it means an ecstatic expression, in deep, mystic language, of spiritual emotion, of prayers and praises. But these doubts need not greatly trouble us. The point is that it was one of the charismata of the Spirit, and one especially coveted by the Corinthian brethren, because it was, in a measure, a spectacular gift. But however useful it may have been, it was of man's self a thing apart, a temporary gift, which, when it had accomplished the object of its bestowal, was to cease. When we get to heaven the confusion resultant from the pride and folly of Babel shall be done away. I do not know what particular language we are going to speak; but it is going to be the one language of heaven, of God, of love.

"Whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." Knowledge is an excellent thing. Its price is above rubies. It is beyond the value of pure gold. Our

pastors and people ought sedulously to cultivate it. Knowledge is power. It serves important ends. It is a source of great pleasure. And yet it shall vanish away—not in the sense that there shall be no more knowledge, but in this sense, that the knowledge we are capable of acquiring in this present state of being shall fade into nothingness by the side of the knowledge which shall break in on our perfected minds once we have passed beyond the confines and limitations of this present life. Our present knowledge shall vanish as the light of the star vanishes with the advent of the sun.

Here those who have laboriously gathered the largest stores of information are like children who have gathered little handfuls of pebbles on the seashore; beyond them stretches the limitless ocean of unexplored truth. How often we are forced to say, even of the things with which we come in contact every day, "I do not know." In our own chosen field of theology how little we really know. There are, and we thank God that there are, grand, triumphant certainties in the spiritual world, which stand out like polar stars to guide us through the maze in which we live. But many of these truths are known more by spiritual intuition than by an action of the mind. As to knowing these things by the processes of mind, we behold them much as we do the nebulous haze of the Milky Way—through a glass darkly.

We have an illustration of this vanishing state of human knowledge constantly before us. In nearly all branches of human learning the textbooks of a score years ago, in great part, have been relegated to the lumber-rooms of antiquated things. Much of that which bears the dignified title of science must be rewritten every decade. And men change their philosophical sys-

tems much as they do their manners and their dress. Why, oh why, should the spirit of mortal be proud?

Thank God, the time is coming when all this knowing, which stands on the dim borderland of knowledge, shall vanish away. And God's people shall come into their long lost heritage, see with unclouded vision, and know as they are known.

If St. Paul was constrained to write thus to the Corinthians with respect to the gifts of prophecy, of tongues, of knowledge, and the like, because they desired these things as an end in themselves, instead of desiring them as a means to an end, what would he say, what does the Master say, of the things which absorb so nearly all the interest and activity of a great many professing Christians of today? Pride swells in many bosoms; but pride of what? Of gifts of the Spirit? No! It would be bad enough if this were so. But instead of this it is pride of dollars and of cents, of houses and merchandise, of power and prestige. Men still desire the gift of second sight, not often to divine the mind of the Spirit, but rather that they may forecast the state of the market, the rise and fall of commodities, and the ebb and flow of the currents of politics.

Men are emulous of the gifts of speech, but very seldom that they may excel in prayer and praise. Is it not that they may shine with their own light, and be able to turn the voice of speech into the metallic clang of silver and gold? There are rivalries in our midst, but mostly along what lines? In the cultivation of character, the things of the soul, which shall endure when the monuments of marble and brass have been wasted away by the trying hand of time, and the world itself has passed away into the nothingness from which it came? Are they not, in large part, for things either as

gross as the earth we tread, or as ephemeral as the shadows which fall athwart our path? There are contentions among us, plenty of them. But for what are we contending? For the things which shall become an inalienable heritage? The things for which Christ contended? and Paul? and Augustine? and Luther? and Calvin? Are our contentions not far too frequently mere factional fights, the result of pride and petty jealousy?

Why will we not learn, learn betimes, that the things which flit across our pathway of life like shadows, the things which serve a purpose, and perish with the using, are not worthy the absorbing, distracting, exhausting attention of those who are heirs of immortality? Do not misunderstand me. There is no one who is less inclined to preach a doctrine of indifference to the present order of things. It is, in a measure, through the material and temporal that we are to work our way up to the things which are spiritual and eternal. That which the Apostle urges is that we learn the true valuation of things. As creatures with the breath of immortality in us, we are to appreciate the things which are temporal only in so far as they can be used in attaining the eternal good, the kingdom of God. The things which are material are to be prized only in so far as they can be made to minister to the spiritual. And as an aid in keeping ourselves from becoming absorbed in and distracted by the perishing things of this life, the Apostle would have us label them all, writing on the first: "It shall fail"; on the second: "It shall cease"; on the third: "It shall vanish away."

But, my brethren, when we have thus labeled these, and all kindred things, we have not labeled everything of this life. There are gifts which are transient, but there are also—

II. GIFTS WHICH ARE PERMANENT

"Covet earnestly the best gifts . . . But whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away . . . Yet shew I unto you a more excellent way . . . Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

What new views we have of everything when we are living in the steady enlightened consciousness that we are walking the path which leads to the throne of God; that we are living in a world where, in spite of sin and its disastrous consequences, all things are working, however mysteriously, to aid us, God's children, in our homeward, our heavenward journey. Under such conditions life assumes a new dignity. The things of earth shrink and fade into their proper proportions as subordinate agencies in the accomplishment of the one grand design for which God has placed us in this world. But in passing from the scenes of earth to the glories of heaven there are things we shall carry with us; qualities, virtues, gifts of God, which shall have become part of the tissue of our being. Among these the most prominent will be the three theological virtues—faith, hope and charity (love).

These three gifts are so closely related, so intimately interwoven, they work so harmoniously hand in hand, that it is often hard to distinguish them. But there are marks by which they may be profitably differentiated. Faith is the source of hope and love. Faith is that which clings to the declared promises of God. Hope is that which looks forward to, and, in a measure, anticipates, and, by anticipation, now enjoys, the good things of God yet to come. Love is that which goes out to God

Himself, the Giver of every good and perfect gift. Faith receives. Hope waits. Love gives. Faith battles; hope fortifies; love ministers. Faith overcomes the world. Hope is willing to renounce the world. Love helps to save the world.

"Now abideth faith." To speak adequately of faith one should have the tongue of St. Paul, Augustine, or Luther.

What is faith? We define it, primarily, as an explicit knowledge of these truths, revealed to us by God, in man, with all that He has done for us, and all the blessings He bestows on us for our salvation. To the knowledge of these truths, revealed to us by God, in the Scriptures, we add assent, approval, another act of the intellect. And to these two, the knowledge which God has given, and the assent for which this truth has prepared the way, we add confidence—the Spirit-wrought surrender of the will, of self, into God's hands. This is faith, a God-given gift, a faculty of the soul, which brings us back into touch with God; which prepares us to receive, and becomes the vehicle by which we receive, God's gifts—forgiveness, sonship, heirship, new life, new powers. Faith is the underlying principle of man's life in God. It is, so to speak, the electric wire which connects us with the fount of Godhead, and along which there is conveyed to us all of the Divine that we are capable of appropriating.

Would you ask what, in addition, this faith is capable of doing for a man? Read the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. Read the life of St. Paul, who, by faith, could rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, even while prison walls shut out the light and chains clanked on his limbs. Read the lives of the countless martyrs, the lives of the missionaries; look at the tens of thousands

of humble lives, in every walk of life, which have been purified, enriched, ennobled, lifted above the pettiness and sordidness of this present life, and all by the power of God in answer to a simple faith in the Son of God.

"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.

"(And whosoever) is born of God overcometh the world.

"And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

And this faith shall endure as long as God and man endure. Death cannot destroy it. The perfect life and the glories of heaven will not make it superfluous. The faith of the present will doubtless change as to some of its aspects, and some of its objects; but in so far as faith is the acknowledgment of dependence on God, in so far as it is the medium by which we humbly receive the gifts of God's love, by which through eternity we shall live, faith can never be extinguished without the death of the soul. Confidence, the childlike repose of the creature in the Creator, which is the very quintessence of faith, must be as endless as the life of God's redeemed and glorified children. Faith abides.

"And now abideth hope." Our religion is a religion of hope. The Bible is a Book of hope, the Word of a God of hope. Soon after the dawn of creation, when man stood mourning a lost Eden, the everlasting Father drew near, and whispered in the ears of His erring children: "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." This was the birthday of hope for a lost world.

Hope, the expectation of future good, is the sustaining power of the children of disappointment, of suffer-

ing and death. But the natural man's hope is only too often a fitful will-o'-the-wisp—a mirage, leading into bogs and quagmires, and never fully satisfying.

It is the Christian's lively hope, the hope of an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven, which becomes the true anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast. It is hope, the Christian's hope, born of faith and rooted in the promises, which sustains our flagging energies when we are weary and worn with life's battles. It is hope, the vision of the perfect men and women we are to be, which inspires us in our endeavor to attain the things which are true, and pure, and lovely, and of good report; for "every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he (our Saviour) is pure." It is hope which gives steadfastness to our purpose. It is hope which brings a measure of peace and joy into life, even in the midst of defeats and sufferings. Hope is the Pilgrim's vision from the Delectable Mountain.

And, like faith, hope is transmuted into life. In a measure, the hope of the present will be changed into fruition. But hope itself, that emotion compounded of desire and ever renewed expectation of future good, will be as deathless as the deathless soul. Hope is a permanent gift.

"And now abideth charity." As we proceed difficulties increase. Artist, poet, orator have all vainly tried to do justice to this subject. No wonder they failed. The substance of Deity is expressed in this one little word—"God is *love*."

Part of the difficulty lies with the misconceptions and perversions of men. Love with many is but a blind passion, often base, at best only an unreasoning instinct. And with the noblest of men there is in the conception

of love too much which is narrow, selfish, exclusive and individualistic. The love which St. Paul lauds is not of this kind; nor yet is it mystical or sentimental, much less hysterical. The love of St. Paul and St. John is wrapped up in, and pervades, the whole system of theology, both in its Godward and its manward aspects. It is diffused in the revelation of the divine nature. On man's side it has its origin in his faith in Jesus, and His redemptive work. It mounts up to heaven and worships at God's throne. It permeates the daily life of God's child, and governs all his actions. This love is the realization, in man, of the angel's song: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Love is the greatest of God's gifts to men. "And now abideth faith, hope, charity . . . but the greatest of these is charity." Love is the greatest, not because it will endure longest. There is no particular excellence in mere duration. The common flint may endure as long as the purest diamond. Love is greatest because it is most Godlike. Faith and hope appropriate for self; love serves, and service is the Biblical ideal of greatness. "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Brethren, how about this gift? Is it receiving the attention among us that its importance deserves? Is there not often cause for us to tremble when we consider the Biblical doctrine of love? Let there be no alarm. Not one scintilla of the doctrine of faith do we yield. We hold fast, with firm grasp, the grand, Biblical, comforting doctrine of justification by faith alone. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of

yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." We claim no justifying merit for the warmest, most active love. And yet there is merit in love. There is this merit in it that God wants us to have it, is pleased when we do have it, is grieved when we lack it.

According to Bible teaching, love, the reflection of the love wherewith Christ loved us, is a necessary and inevitable result of that faith which justifies. And where the result is lacking there is room for inquiry as to whether the cause is working. Let us not forget that there is a faith, so called, which has ever been the fruitful parent of indifferentism, secularism and the whole brood of isms, the end of which is the death of the soul. We dare not forget that he who hates his brother, who delights in strife, however much he may talk about faith, has no spiritual life in him.

It is God who says: "Every one that loveth is born of God." And the negative proposition may be maintained with equal positiveness: He that loveth not is not born of God. He that loveth not cannot know God. He may know something about theological propositions; but, important as this is, it is altogether a different thing from knowing God Himself. St Paul knew theology, and was a past master in the art of stating theological propositions with point and power; but he says: "I know *whom* I have believed, and am persuaded that *he* is able to keep that which I have committed unto *him* against that day."

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could

remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth."

Brethren, we need more of this greatest of Christian graces. We need more of it in our pulpits, more of it in our pews, more of it in our business, more of it in our homes, more of it everywhere. And there is only one place where it can be gotten: in the Word, and in the sacraments of the God of love; in fellowship with God Himself. There is only one place where we can get this love: at the foot of the Cross. There, as we behold the incarnation of love suspended between heaven and earth, His body pierced by the ruthless iron, His lifeblood trickling away, and all that we poor, vile, death-deserving sinners might live, there, there only, is love born in the soul.

And, now, what is the conclusion of this whole matter? In a few words, simply this. Here we have set before us two kinds of gifts. The one class represents the very best of earth; these gifts are nevertheless labeled: "transient, failing, ceasing, vanishing away." The other class sets before us the gifts which go to make up life, to form character, to produce godliness; they are the things which do most toward making earth a paradise, and become our adornment for eternity. Which shall we choose? Which shall we cultivate? Amen.

E. D. HEAD

Dr. B. D. Head is former pastor of the large First Baptist Church of Houston, Texas, and is now serving as President of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is the author of *Why All This Suffering?* etc.

CHAPTER VI

THE ADEQUACY OF CHRIST

"For it pleased the Father that in him should all the fullness dwell" (Colossians 1:19).

WHEN WE survey the world situation of today, a state of unspeakable chaos comes into view. The peoples of the earth reveal a restlessness like that of the sea when its tide ebbs and flows, or when it is overhung by frowning clouds and lashed to fury in a storm. In their desperate futile efforts to make landing, they have run their ship aground and are seeking landing, "some on planks, and some on other things." But above the clamor and vague gropings of all this confusion there appears the calm, confident face of the Son of God, with that poise born of conscious mastery and adequate power to meet the need. Yea, even though the darkness be like that of the fourth watch of the night, He comes walking on the distressed sea with its contrary winds to speak the reassuring words, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid."

Let us be assured. We have an adequate Christ. We are not left to vague gropings; our Eternal Pilot with nail prints in His hands is at the helm. Jesus is not behind time; He is ahead of time. We join with Renan: "Whatever the surprises of history, Jesus will

never be surpassed." Also with Jean Paul Richter: "Christ, being the holiest among the mighty and the mightiest among the holy, has lifted with His pierced hands empires off their hinges, turned the stream of the centuries out of its channel, and still governs the future." Yea, we take our stand by the side of the Emperor Julian when he exclaimed: "O Galilean, Thou hast conquered." Christ is the rider of the white horse, seated firmly in the saddle, going forth "conquering, and to conquer."

But we are to consider some of the enduring marks of His adequacy.

I. THE ADEQUACY OF PRIORITY

The Scriptures are most emphatic: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God" (John 1:1-2). "Of course, there never was a 'beginning' with God or with Logos, but we use the term for all that portion of eternity previous to man's career." The phrase "with God" means "face to face" and suggests the most intimate fellowship of equals. We quote once more from John, the words of Jesus in the prayer intercession: "O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:5). Now hear what Paul says: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Phil. 2:6). Again, "He is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Col. 1:17). The author of Hebrews declares for priority also: "By whom also he made the worlds" (Heb. 1:2). More detailed still: "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones,

or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him" (Col. 1:16).

Jesus was no afterthought of God; He was equal with God, living in personal conscious life before time began. Neither was He accidental or incidental in the divine scheme. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End; He is the Creator and the Sustainer of the universe.

II. THE ADEQUACY OF DIVINE FULLNESS

In Jesus the Eternal broke through into time. "For it pleased the Father that in him should all the fulness dwell" (Col. 1:19). "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9). "And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace" (John 1:16). It is thus that He brought the supreme revelation of God. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1:18). "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). This is in accord with His own answer to the challenge of Philip, "Shew us the Father, and it sheweth us" (John 14:8). Jesus answered him, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). Indeed, He is "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person" (Heb. 1:3).

So if I would see God, I must look at Jesus. "God hath packed into the personality of Jesus all the glories of the Deity and of humanity. Like a ship filled to capacity with its cargo, a walled city of the olden time

with its soldiers, Jesus is packed with God. Never did He empty Himself of His divine nature or His attributes."¹ "He emptied, stripped Himself of the insignia of Majesty,"² but not of its essence. Plato voiced the agelong cry of the human heart: "We look for a god or a god-inspired man to show us the light and take the darkness from our eyes." Jesus is the answer. He is not merely a god-inspired man, but the God-Man, "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3); "That which was from the beginning, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life" (I John 1:1).

"Till God in human form I see,
My thoughts no comfort find,
The holy, just and sacred Three,
Are terrors to my mind.
But if Immanuel's face appear,
My hope, my joy, begins.
His Name forbids my slavish fear,
His grace forgives my sins."³

III. THE ADEQUACY OF A TIMELESS AND BOUNDLESS APPEAL

Consider this in the light of the radical differences between the successive generations of men. What surprising changes have occurred. Yet, Jesus outspans all the changes. The "acids of modernity" may have erased some boundaries and encroached upon forbidden areas destructively, but they have not reduced Jesus. At this very hour it is "Christ or chaos." If we face the tragic breakdown in character so evident in current life, we

¹Dr. L. R. Scarborough in *With Christ After the Lost*, page 53. The Broadman Press.

²From Lightfoot. Cited by A. T. Robertson in *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, page 444.

³Quoted in *The Christ I Know*, by T. J. Villers.

are forced to look to Jesus as the one ideal. His challenge, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" has never been successfully contradicted. On the character of Jesus there is no blemish: "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not" (I Peter 2:22-23).

"What least defect or shadow of defect,
What rumor, tattled by an enemy
Of inference loose, what lack of grace
Even in torture's grasp, or sleep's, or death's—
Oh, what amiss may I forgive in Thee,
Jesus, good Paragon, Thou Crystal Christ?"⁴

It is His character embodied in the hearts of men which is the supreme need. Turn to the racial animosities emerging on every hand today, the growing nationalism which seeks to live for itself and exclude all others. Christ alone can make the world into a brotherhood: "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Matt. 12:50). "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all" (Col. 3:11). Contemplate the growing tendency toward the totalitarian state with its most dangerous feature, the domination of the Church. Are we to turn back the pages of history and commit this unspeakable adultery? Not if we heed Jesus: "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's" (Matt. 22:21). As the clouds of war become more ominous and streams of blood flow on fierce battle fronts, we recall the appropriate warning

⁴ Quoted from *The Manhood of the Master*, by Harry Emerson Fosdick, page 84.

of Jesus spoken nineteen hundred years ago: "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matt. 26:52).

Envision the armies of young people all over the world who are marching, restlessly marching—marching, as we may readily see, "at the call of personalities rather than program,"⁵ and also "behind the call of the trumpets of a hard patriotism."⁶ It is reported that on a great banner of a Hitler youth encampment last summer the following words appeared: "The highest duty of German youth is to die for the Fatherland."⁷ On being asked the reason for their marching, some Chinese youth responded: "We must wake up China. China needs martyrs. We are candidates for the position."⁸ It is ours to tell them that Jesus, not Hitler, not Mussolini, not Stalin, is the One under whose banner we must march if we are to know the sweets of victory. This is distinctly His appeal. Oh, that we would heed it!

IV. THE ADEQUACY OF A UNIQUE REDEMPTION

"There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (I Tim. 2:5-6). "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (I Pet. 3:18). Therefore salvation is not in an institution, ritual, ordinance, or ceremonial, but in a Person. It is not in a sacrament regarded as a vehicle of grace, but in a

⁵ Daniel A. Poling in *Youth Marches*, page 7. The Judson Press.

⁶ *Ibid.*, page 8.

⁷ *Ibid.*, page 8.

⁸ *Ibid.*, page 10.

Sacrifice, that of the spotless Lamb of God "slain from the foundation of the world." Salvation is not in a rosary, but in the Rose of Sharon, which was bruised and broken before it could give forth its redeeming fragrance to a world under the stench of sin. Neither is salvation in penance, it is in "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21).

A dying doctor, according to a story given by E. Stanley Jones,⁹ was about to go into eternity without salvation. The physician who attended him was a Christian. This Christian doctor sought earnestly to show his dying doctor friend the way. At first his brow was knit in foreboding perplexity. Presently, under the clarifying testimony of this Christian friend, the light broke into the face of the dying man. In an exclamation of understanding, having found the security of saving experience, he said, "All my life I have been troubled about what to believe, and now I see it is Whom to trust."

Life lifted life. "If baptism saves, then baptism is the Saviour, not Jesus. If the Church saves, then the Church is the Saviour, not Jesus. If good works save, then each good deed is a Saviour, not Jesus. If Noah had been imbued with the conception some have today of salvation, he would have worshiped the Ark after the Flood instead of building an altar to the God of the Ark." Let us remember that this redemption came by blood. Other mediators entered in by the blood of bulls and goats; Jesus "by his own blood entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. 9:12). See Him there on the tree, thorns piercing His brow, nails through His hands,

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⁹ *The Christ of the Indian Road*, page 172.

a spike through His feet. These wounds are "not poor dumb mouths." Oh, that I could put a tongue in every wound of Jesus that would impel every sinner to rise and go to the Father by the way of the Cross. But I cannot, I need not; God has put these tongues there already. They are vocal with one message: "Sinner, God loves you." "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).

"Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?"

No, nowhere else. It is on Calvary only where "mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Ps. 85:10).

V. THE ADEQUACY OF A VICTORIOUS RESURRECTION

"Much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Rom. 5:10). Recall the time when Aaron's priesthood was questioned in the rebellion of Korah. God directed Moses to lay up a rod for each tribe before the testimony with the assurance that the rod chosen by him would blossom with life. It was done, each tribe presenting a perfectly dead rod. "And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds" (Num. 17:8).

I know of another morrow on whose radiant morning a priesthood was forever established, not by the budding of an inanimate rod, but by the resurrection from the dead of the High Priest Himself, a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, the Lion of the Tribe of

Judah, the Bright and Morning Star, whose Name is above every name, even Jesus. He had Himself predicted it, "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day" (Matt. 16:21). "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24).

Simon Peter also gave convincing evidence. He quotes the words of David, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption," but makes bold to show that these words do not apply to David himself because "he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day." What, then, is their application? "Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption" (Acts 2:30-31). "We have no sepulcher," to quote the words of E. Stanley Jones, "because we have no corpse." The sepulchers of all other founders of religions are "with us unto this day." This is the crowning, differentiating miracle; the miracle which gives authentication to all His miracles. No other historic person in the world has ever risen shortly after his death and burial to continue his influence by the power of an endless life except Jesus. There have been resuscitations, but only one resurrection. Christ alone is the "firstborn from the dead." Angels heralded the news, saying, "He is not here; for he is risen." Eyewitnesses identified Him during the eventful forty days

in which He lived among them in His glorified body. Paul stated earth's darkest assumption, "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain," but he was quick to show that it was wholly groundless when he declared, "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (I Cor. 15:20).

It is by this unparalleled conquest of death that Christ turned the light on "life and immortality." "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19). Our heaven is an "opened heaven" from whose portals come angels "ascending and descending upon the Son of man" (John 1:51). He is the ladder of communication; He is God's way to man, man's way to God. "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus" (Heb. 6:19-20).

VI. WE HAVE IN HIM ADEQUATE LORDSHIP

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord" (II Cor. 4:5). With us there are not "lords many." "For one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren" (Matt. 23:8). This leads us to again affirm the priesthood of the believer. Each one of us in the democracy of the redeemed can approach God for himself directly without the intervention or contravention of any human mediators. The way is open through the blood of Jesus. The veil of the Temple has been rent in twain from the top to the bottom. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace" (Heb. 4:16).

Recall also the competency of the soul before God. There is no coercion by priest or potentate; all are free to worship God or not to worship Him. In matters spiritual we acknowledge one supreme allegiance to Jesus, our risen, reigning Lord. Thinking further of this Lordship, we are led to consider "the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). He is its Head; it is His mystical body. Are we to be led astray by puerile appeals calculated to disparage it or relegate it to some junk heap of outworn things? God forbid. Hear Jesus: "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). Let its doctrines, its ordinances, its program, all be precious to us, because Christ our Lord approves and commands them. It is ever a puzzle to me to understand the consistency of the fellow who proudly announces his loyalty to the words of Jesus, "Love your neighbor as yourself," and in the next breath refuses to obey Him in baptism. The same adequate Lord indorses and commands both. Then let us heed them both, and all others beside, because the One Pre-eminent Lord has spoken. Again, we find ourselves looking out upon the fields so white unto the harvest. It is not for us to dawdle and quibble about this mighty business of world conquest; our Lord has spoken: "And (he) said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, And ye are witnesses of these things" (Luke 24:46-48). Before He spoke the above words, "he shewed them his hands and his feet" (Luke 24:40). These were the marks of His identity.

Hear Him give His shout of triumph: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore . . . and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. 1:18). Come, let us follow in His train!

"All hail the power of Jesus' Name!
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all."

Q - The Great Physician
Intro. all of ↑
Earlier times

T. C. INNES

Excell

Rev. T. C. Innes is the popular young pastor of the historic Knox Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. He is the author of *Love's Bleeding Heart*, etc.

CHAPTER VII

THE GREAT RESTORER

"He restoreth my soul" (Psalm 23:3).

THE HEART of God is the hospital of the world. And in all Scripture we see the divine standpoint to be what has rightly been called the "curative viewpoint." The Saviour in His earthly ministry was ever calling to Himself unredeemed and lost sinners; some responded and were renewed beyond all recognition, as, for instance, the sordid Zacchæus; and others were disobedient, as, for instance, the rich young ruler who in spite of many grand moral qualities preferred his riches to Christ. However, it was as important and gracious a ministry of Christ to restore those who had obeyed the call of God but who fell into weakness and sin. And it is the most outstanding element perhaps of Christ's post-resurrection ministry that He seemed to turn from the pre-crucifixion ministry of salvation to the lost, to the task of restoring His own inner circle to utmost spiritual health for the great task of establishing the divine institution of the Church.

Wesley and a preacher of his were once invited to lunch with a gentleman after service. The great man had very plain manners. While talking with their host's daughter, who was remarkable for her beauty and who

had been profoundly impressed by Wesley's preaching, this good man noticed that she wore a number of rings. During a pause in the meal he took hold of the young lady's hand, and, raising it, called Wesley's attention to the sparkling gems. "What do you think of this, sir," said he, "for a Methodist hand?" The girl turned crimson. The question was extremely awkward for Wesley, whose aversion to all display of jewelry was very well known. With a quiet, benevolent smile, he looked up and simply said, "The hand is very beautiful." The young lady appeared at evening worship without her jewels, and became a firm and decided Christian. This is how to win souls.

Let us examine the risen Lord's ministry to three representative individuals: Mary Magdalene, Thomas Didymus and Simon Barjona; and then to two typical groups: the Emmaus couple, and the Galilee fishermen.

After His resurrection the Lord Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene, whose previous life was anything but attractive. The sources of our information are Matthew twenty-eight, Mark sixteen, Luke twenty-four, and John twenty. "Then the disciples went away again unto their home. But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping." Mary's tender womanly heart was overcome by agonies of *sorrow*. She had lost her Lord to the cruel hands of the strong soldiers, and all seemed lost. Yet in a kind of forlorn hope she alone of all the believers stayed around the scene of His interment. And suddenly someone spoke, "Why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?"

Yes, that was *the recall of a personal interview*. It was the application of Christ's superb therapeutical skill. For, see how foolish were the mistakes that Mary made. She looked for the living among the dead. She

sorrowed when she should have rejoiced. She thought Christ had been carried off by enemies, when He had, in fact, returned according to His promise to His friends. She regarded as ordinary men the couriers of God who watched by the now empty tomb. She remained outside the open sepulcher, when she could have discovered the truth by going in. She even mistook her own risen Lord for the local gardener! So we see her standing beside the vacant tomb, lamenting in mistaken sorrow, continuing in dejected supposition, but, when obedient, she became a blessing to all the disciples by being the first to bear to them the news that He had risen.

The important thing is that although Christ had just demonstrated His celestial splendor and divine sovereignty by the almighty act of resurrection from the dead, yet He immediately stooped to restore a feeble, foolish, forgetful woman. For she was frail in her beautiful womanly frame, she was foolish to have forgotten her Lord's own repeated resurrection promise before the awful events of Golgotha, but in all she was and did she was very human. Her reality and sincerity of sorrow had blinded and deranged her. But Christ tenderly talked to her, restored her to normal thought and functioning, and forgave all her mistakes. And the proof that Christ's first clinical case in this special post-resurrection ministry was successful was the exclamation of her restored faculties, "Rabboni!"

But there is a Thomas to restore too. His was a character quite different from Mary's. We read in John's narrative (20:24-29) that the disciples were gathered together within closed doors for fear of the Jews, when Christ appeared to them. "But Thomas . . . was not with them when Jesus came." Where was he at that historic hour? What occupied him? The disciples

took the next opportunity to inform him of the events which happened in his absence, but apparently he was of a different mind.

No, he would not believe unless so and so, and this and that! He had too much intelligence to fall into the error of taking things at their face value. "Except I shall see . . . and put my finger . . . I will not believe." Before we study Christ's ministry to *doubt*, let us note four things that Thomas did amiss. Unfortunately he absented himself from the covenanted trysting place. And through the centuries many church members have repeated Thomas' mistake to their own terrible loss, and the hurt of the body of Christ. But he also tenaciously retained a preconceived view of the situation. And personal idiosyncracies and cherished opinions have often imprisoned the mind of the believer. The closed mind is a pathetic tragedy. Presumptuously Thomas waived the united testimony of all his fellow believers, too. How ridiculous conceit makes a man. And his sin was worse because that testimony was clear and unambiguous, it was unanimous and decided, and ample and sufficient. It was an honest statement by intelligent men—as intelligent as Thomas, and as honest. But he defiantly laid down his own conditions for assenting to the fact of which they tried to persuade him, or for allowing that the resurrection was a possibility. And by all this he practiced unreason, presumption, pride and folly.

But it is such people who are usually schismatics and the leading exclusivists. One of the great lessons of life is that we are not very likely to be in any remarkable sense above our fellows! We are all geniuses perhaps, but most of us are very small ones. Yet Christ eight days later, though really rebuking Thomas, ex-

presses His actually scathing judgment very tenderly—"All right, Thomas, look at My hands, put your finger here, and put your hand here into My side; be no more unbelieving, but believe"! It was *the rebuke of a grieved heart*, and it won him completely, so that he reverently uttered that gem of faith and love, "My Lord and my God." You see, Jesus would no more leave that bigoted unbeliever outside the circle because of his unlovely exclusiveness than He would brush aside the poor weeping woman. His technique is to win the foolish and repulsive!

In that band of very ordinary men and women there was also the fascinating figure of poor Peter. And after the unbelievable story of his dismal and repeated denial and repudiation of Christ when challenged by a servant girl, we read that after restoring Mary from her passionate sorrow, and Thomas from his disabling doubt, He turned to Peter's *failure*. John tells us the story, "So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" The Bible is never careless of its words, and the seemingly similar question thrice repeated is really full of meaning.

First, Christ asked, "Are you devoted to Me?" and Peter said, "I love You." Second, Christ asked, "Are you devoted to Me?" and Peter replied, "I love You." Peter was grieved by the repetition of that searching question before all the brethren, and yet knowing his own former enthusiastic declarations of his utter loyalty, and how he had broken his own loud words with incredible expletives, he would not now use any more pretentious word than "I love You." And then Christ used Peter's own sincere and simple but very meaningful words, and He said, "Do you love Me?" and Peter

finally said, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." It was the word of a renewed and restored believer. Christ then recommissioned the man who so recently swore that he had no knowledge of Christ! "Feed my lambs," said the Lord, and then, "Tend my sheep," and finally, "Feed my little sheep." Even a man who utterly and violently repudiates Christ, as Peter did in the high priest's courtyard, this great Restorer reclaims with the invincible weapons of eternal affection.

And we learn here some of the most profound lessons of all Scripture. First, *the innermost essence of the Christian religion is personal love for Christ*. Just that. And there is no substitute in all the wide universe. Only Biblical Christianity teaches this infinitely spiritual, but almost universally forgotten, truth. Second, *the grand qualification for Christian service is love*. Love is the *sine qua non*. And, third, *the indispensable prerequisite for communion with God is this same genuine love*. You may say prayers, in great pomp, like the Pharisee in the Temple, but you only commune with God when your whole being goes out to Him in affectionate and worshiping devotion. And, fourth, *the only reparation that a pardoned soul can offer is renewed devotion*. Peter had denied Him, and He could have cast him off forever at His word. But Christ, the Lover of souls, the tremendous Lover, the "Hound of heaven" would not let go this still unstable soul, because one day even Peter was to be filled with the Spirit of Christ and of glory, and was to be a rock and a leader of God's triumphant host, and an author, under the Spirit's grace, of Scripture itself! Here is *the renewal of a slighted commission*.

About this time, in the days of His flesh, as Bishop Bickerseth has well put it—

"Slowly along the rugged pathway walked
Two saddened wayfarers, bent on one quest;
With them Another, who had asked to share
Their travel since they left the city walls;
Their converse too intent for speed; and oft
Where lingered on the rocks the sunset tints
They checked their footsteps, careless of the hour,
And waning light and heavy falling dews.
For from the Stranger's lips came words that burn'd
And lit the altar fuel on their hearts,
Consuming fear, and quickening faith at once.
God's oracles grew luminous as He spoke,
And all along the ages good from ill
And light from darkness sprang as day from night."

The Emmaus couple holds a place too in the after-resurrection work of our adorable Lord. Their pain was *perplexity*, "We trusted . . ." (Luke 24:13 ff.), but now their souls were menaced by a sense of void, of hopes unfulfilled, of promises apparently withdrawn. Then the divine intervention took place, "Jesus himself drew near, and went with them . . .!" They thought of Him as dead, they knew He had been crucified, made a spectacle for heaven and hell, and like so many still, they forgot that the last word is never with the Devil. Jesus Himself drew near, no apparition, but so human and actual that they never thought it was He! He walked seven miles, and spent three hours after His age-abiding triumph in the Garden, just to comfort two obscure, lonely and dejected believers. He questioned them kindly. He directed them to the Eternal Word of God in the Holy Scripture, and the Book revealed Him to them. The opened Bible resulted in the burning heart. The Order of the Burning Heart has

room for many more to qualify for its noble membership. The mistakes of these two were that they did not believe the Old Testament—a perennial mistake that still robs men of depth and vision—and they forgot what Christ promised before He died. Luke gives us the result—"their eyes were holden." No blazing vision of God's present power and eternal conquest was theirs. And their kind of perplexity is very infectious. So Jesus, in the resplendent courtesy that is always His, drew near, spoke, accompanied, explained, and finally, rebuked their slowness to believe.

Faith in God against all odds is always justified in the long run. Life without Christ would be just like their experience at that hour—overwhelmed with human weakness and grief, and clouded with doubt and perplexity. But when Christ is admitted to life He brings still, as to the Emmaus couple, illumination, as the Bible becomes a living counsellor; inspiration, for the eyes are focused upon eternal realities; and usability, for the once despondent now become joyful messengers to others, and all the miles back to Jerusalem are light-heartedly retrodden, because the news and experience of being with the living Christ cannot be confined, but must be told, and told it was to the wondering believers. Have you realized Christ's method? He told this couple to do two things: first, to define their grief, and, second, to state their belief. There it is, *the solvent of perplexity*. Do these two things in His presence, and faith and power will replace your most cavernous and haunting perplexity. We must learn the duty of living by faith from these two, and the power of the burning heart!

And now that we have seen how the Great Physician of the soul heals sorrow, doubt, failure, and perplexity,

let us see how He deals with *discouragement*. John in his twenty-first chapter takes us to the Lake of Galilee, that Lake endeared by early associations in the life of Jesus, hallowed by sacred memories, and to the fishermen-followers recommended by past experience. It was there they had made a living, and to the old job they returned when their hopes had been shattered by the cruel murder of the Lord they had hoped would set up the very kingdom of God in their midst! To Mary a word, to Thomas a sentence or two, to Peter a conversation, to the fishermen back in their old haunts, Christ dispensed a sacrament! Those seven were toiling hard at their own profession when morning dawned upon them, and the bland new morning smiled wanly down upon blank failure—they had toiled all night and had caught nothing! Once again Jesus came on the scene and asked, "Boys, have you anything to eat?" He was to them at that time merely an ordinary fellow Galilean, apparently hungry, and suggesting ordinary Oriental hospitality from them. Then He advised them to cast on the other side, and being driven by the sense of failure, they naïvely did as they were told by this unknown stranger, and the haul was such that their nets would not support the weight of fish; then John perceived it was the Lord, and he told Peter so—"It is the Lord!" When they came to shore they found a fire, with bread and fish ready for them, and the Lord of glory, ending His post-resurrection ministry as He had begun His earthly ministry, serving. *Here is the cure for discouragement.*

So the Lord won the confidence of these good men, and we learn with them these things—the fruitlessness of labor without His presence and power, and the certainty of success for those who obey Him at once and

always. In every instance, Christ restores the erring, and before He ascends again to the glory He always had with the Eternal Father, He secures the individual, personal complete functioning of faith and love in the heart of each believer who will respond to Him.

HARRY A. IRONSIDE

Dr. H. A. Ironside is pastor of the great Moody Memorial Church in Chicago. He is recognized as one of America's greatest Bible teachers and preachers and is a prolific writer. Among his publications are: *Addresses on the Gospel of John, The Lamp of Prophecy, The Continual Burnt-Offering, Care for God's Fruit Trees, The Great Parenthesis*, etc.

CHAPTER VIII

SAMSON, THE CASTAWAY

"And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once, for he hath shewed me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and brought money in their hand. And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him. And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him. But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house" (Judges 16:18-21).

"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (I Corinthians 9:24).

TRUTH is always two-sided, that is, there are two ways of looking at every great doctrine presented in the Word

of God. Take the question of salvation. It is true that no man can save himself by anything that he can possibly do. He can be saved only by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Scripture makes this abundantly clear; and yet it is just as true that if a man does not do something, he will never be saved at all. He must come to the place where he faces his sins and receives the Lord Jesus Christ as his own personal Saviour. Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ are inseparable.

Then, again, there are many passages in the Bible touching upon that life which we receive from God through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ by which we know that it is not of a forfeitable nature. It is eternal life, and therefore when once we are saved, we are saved forevermore. Some people object to this. They tell us that they do not believe in the doctrine of eternal security, and they think that they have valid grounds for refusing it on the basis that there are many Scriptures which warn believers of the danger of losing their reward, and one of the texts taken today suggests the possibility of becoming a castaway. Some feel that to insist that believers once born again have a life which can never be destroyed is to give license for sin. We have even heard of professed Christians glorying in this doctrine and saying, "Now I have been saved; at such and such a time I took Christ as my Saviour, and I know I am saved for eternity. It doesn't make any difference now how I live or behave myself. I can never be lost; my soul is forever secure." Frankly, I have never heard anybody actually say this, but others have told me that they have listened to people speak in this way. I should not be surprised if this were really true,

for some folk are always ready to misuse any doctrine of Scripture.

We are warned against those who would turn the grace of God into licentiousness. I do not question the fact that there is an element of danger in proclaiming the doctrine of eternal security, precious as it is, to unsaved or unspiritual people. Scripture not only tells us that "he that hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ," but it also declares, "He that endures unto the end, the same shall be saved"; and it warns concerning the danger of becoming a castaway.

While a child of God can never lose eternal life, and no power in earth or hell can pluck him out of the hand of Christ and of God the Father, there is a great deal that he may lose. The New Testament particularly tells us of many important things which we may lose, even though already saved, if we are not careful to walk in obedience to the revealed will of God.

We may lose, first of all, our communion with God, our enjoyment of His fellowship; and that is a very serious loss for any Christian. To have trusted in Christ, to have turned at one time from the world, and then to go on in fellowship with God, is a very solemn thing indeed. When one who has known the Lord becomes cold in heart toward Him and seeks again to enjoy the world from which he was once delivered rather than to find his soul's satisfaction in Christ alone, he is in a very bad way indeed.

Then, secondly, we may lose our testimony, and that too is a very serious thing, for we who are saved have been left in the world to bear witness to Christ and to make known to others the saving power of our adorable

Lord. The Christian who has so sadly failed as to lose the confidence of the very people to whom he seeks to testify for God is in a bad way indeed. As an example, think of Lot in Sodom, whom Scripture calls a "righteous man." Probably we would never have so reckoned Lot had not God Himself thus spoken of him, but note how he lost his testimony by his worldly life. When judgment was about to come upon Sodom and, sent by the angels, he went forth at night to urge his daughters and his sons-in-law to escape from the city which was to be destroyed on the morrow, we are told that "he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law." To them he appeared to be an insane man. The reason lay in the fact that they had never before seen him so desperately in earnest. They had never known him to be so fervent as he was that night. They could not believe that what he told them was true. They thought there was something queer about him, that he was wrong in the head, that he had become demented, because for the first time since they had known him, he was so dead in earnest. You see, he had had no testimony for so long, it was no wonder they thought it strange that he should be so aroused at last. And they refused to accept his warning, and died when the people of Sodom were destroyed.

A child of God who has lost his testimony becomes a hindrance instead of a help. Sinners will look at him and say, "If that is Christianity, then I don't think much of it."

And then, more than that, it is possible to lose rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ. "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward." It is most serious for a believer to contemplate being saved "but so as by fire"; yet Scripture speaks

of that very thing. If a believer's work turns out to be "wood, hay, stubble," it "shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide, which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." But what a solemn thing! How solemn to consider going into the Lord's presence empty-handed.

We sing that song, "Must I Go and Empty-Handed?" The man who wrote those words was one who had lived all of his life for the world and finally, when he lay on his death-bed, a relative of mine, as I learned some years ago, went to him and pointed him to the Saviour. It was my father's own brother who told the dying man of Christ and led him to trust the Saviour. The result was that great joy came to his heart. But a few days later my uncle went again to see him, and found him greatly troubled in soul instead of rejoicing. "What is the matter?" my uncle asked. "Are you afraid you are not saved? Are you afraid to die and to meet God?" "Oh, no," he replied! "It is not that, but I have been thinking of how I have wasted my life and now I have no opportunity to do anything for the One who has saved me. I shall have to go into His presence empty-handed." It was upon this incident that the song was written—

Must I go, and empty-handed;
Must I meet my Saviour so?
Not one soul with which to greet Him;
Must I empty-handed go?

I believe God put it into the poet's heart to write that song and that at the Judgment Seat of Christ there

will be many believers who will say, "Those words so stirred my soul that I determined that I at least would not appear before my Lord empty-handed." And I feel sure that that man who died so distressed because he thought he had no opportunity of doing anything for Christ will be richly rewarded in that day when he finds out how many have been helped and blessed through his dying words thus put into song and carried around the world.

I used to think that the thief who was saved on the cross would not have any reward for service because he was saved at the last moment and there seemed to be no opportunity to do anything for Christ, but I have changed my mind completely about that. I feel certain now that he will have a very rich reward, and I believe that I have had the privilege of helping to procure it for him! Every little while I, as do thousands of other ministers, preach on the dying thief's confession, and I believe that every time I, or any other preacher, tell that story and a poor sinner comes to the Lord, He will remember that, and at the Judgment Seat of Christ our blessed Saviour will turn to that erstwhile thief and say to him, "I am going to give you part of the reward for the salvation of that soul. It will be divided between you and the preacher who told the story."

Scripture speaks of the possibility of being saved but so as by fire, and the man who will thus be saved is the one who has lost his communion with God, has given himself to fleshly indulgence or worldly behavior, thus forfeiting the confidence even of the world outside, and will have to go into the presence of the Lord truly empty-handed, saved himself, but with all his works burned.

But now, what does Paul mean in our text when he

speaks of the possibility of being a castaway? I think we have an answer in the story of Samson which I want you to consider with me for a little while.

Samson was the child of godly parents, and his parents received him as a special gift from God, as an answer to prayer. The name "Samson" means "sunshine" or "sunlight." Have you ever seen a bright, happy child whom people called "Sunshine"? Samson means just that. When Manoah and his wife received this little lad from the Lord, they said, "This is the sunshine of our home," and they gave him that name. But little "Sunshine" grew up and, though mightily used of God for a time, ended with blinded eyes. This Sunshine, who brought such joy into that home, failed, and failed terribly, because he did not do what Paul says he had to do—*keep his body under subjection*.

Paul means here our literal, physical bodies. He says, "But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest after all my work, after all my labors, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." He was not speaking about being sent to hell or being put out of the family of God, but about the servant of God who cannot be used anymore because he has failed so terribly, and will come to the Judgment Seat of Christ without any reward. Paul says he does not want to be found in that condition.

If Samson in his day had only remained to the last the simple, dependent man of God that he was in the beginning, what a different story we would have to tell concerning his last days! He was called by the Spirit of God to deliver Israel. He was a man of faith; there is no question about that. In the eleventh chapter of Hebrews we are distinctly told that he was a man of faith. In verse thirty-two we read: "And what shall I

more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets." He is one of the heroes of the ages, those mighty heroes of faith.

His early days give us an idea of what he might have been if he had only remained the devoted man he was in his youth. But the day came when Samson failed God. In failing God, he failed Israel; and he himself eventually became a "castaway." You know his failure. I don't need to go over the story afresh and tell of the foolish marriage of Samson to the Philistine woman, absolutely contrary to the Word of God. God had commanded His people to make no marriages with the pagan people around them. But Samson said to his parents, "I have found a woman down in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife." See where the trouble was? He was going to please himself, whether it pleased God or not. How many other men of God have failed in the same way! How many a young man or woman has failed in exactly the same way! Many say, "Well, I am going to do as I want to, whether it pleases God or not." What a terrible blunder! What a fatal mistake! How many young Christians have gone that way today! How many have made their plans without reference to the Word of God! Hundreds and thousands of Christians over the world seem to ignore the fact that it is impossible for a child of Light and a child of darkness to have real fellowship together, and after the first fancy has passed away, they face being linked together for life—a child of God and a child of the Devil. An old Puritan once said, "If you are a child of God and you marry a child of the Devil, you can expect to have

trouble with your father-in-law." It always works out that way. Yet, hardly a week goes by but we see some young Christian entering into such a relationship.

That was Samson's first blunder, but he lost his first wife. His father-in-law gave her away to another man. Samson should have realized that God had intervened. Samson was a Nazarite. A Nazarite was an Israelite who devoted himself to God in a peculiar way. All the Israelites belonged to God, but if one of them wished to express his gratitude to Him, he took the vow of the Nazarite. That meant that during the period of His Nazariteship he was devoted to God in more than an ordinary way. During that time he could not eat anything that came from the vine; that is, he could not partake of the joys of this world. He was not to go near the dead, not even in the case of his father or mother, for by sin came death. As an outward sign of his vow he was to let his hair grow long, and was not to cut it.

Samson was a Nazarite to God from his birth. And yet, this God-separated man violated the Word of God, and we find him going into the depths of sin. In the first instance his relation with the Philistine woman was outwardly sanctioned by at least a form of marriage; but in the second instance it is an evil relation. You would think now that he would come to his senses and say, "I am going to God, to confess and judge my sin and to get right." But no, it is not long until he falls in the same way again and again. We talk about sinful habits. No one ever fell into sinful habits who did not start, as Samson did, by repeatedly succumbing to the same sin.

So Samson went on in sin, and at last came the entanglement with Delilah, a heartless woman whose only

thought was to get all the money she could out of him, even to selling him into the hands of the Philistines to be put to death. The poor fellow no doubt thought he loved her, and that she loved him. But Delilah is determined to betray him into the hands of the Philistines, and so now she says, "I will try to find out for you the secret of his strength, and, if I can, I will get him to tell me by what means he may be deprived of it." When Samson comes to see her, she puts on her nicest behavior. I can imagine Samson saying to her, "Do you love me?" and she replies, "Oh, I admire you so! You are so strong, and I admire you so! Samson, tell me why you are so much stronger than other men. Will you tell me the secret of your great strength?" Samson should have sprung up immediately and left her, saying to himself, "I am on dangerous ground. I can never betray the secret of God to this woman." But instead of that, he listens to her, and finally says, "If they bind me with seven green withs that were never dried, then shall I be weak, and be as another man." So she causes him to sleep. Then she gets the withs, probably willows, and binds him with them. She has her Philistine friends waiting in the next room, and just as he begins to waken, she calls, "Samson, the Philistines be upon thee!" Springing to his feet, he snapped the withs asunder, and the Philistines dare not come out to take him.

But Delilah will not give up, and on another day she approaches him and says, "Samson, you mocked me. You didn't tell me the truth. Tell me, where does your strength lie?" And Samson again listens to her, and finally says, "Take new ropes that never have been used and bind me with them, and I will lose my power." And again she gets him to sleep and ties him with the

cords. Again she calls, "Samson, the Philistines be upon thee!" Samson springs to his feet, and snaps the cords asunder.

A third time he comes to her, and I think I can just see her speaking to him: "Samson, hitherto thou hast mocked me, and told me lies: tell me wherewith thou mightest be bound." He looks up, and seeing a weaver's beam near by, answers her, "If thou weavest the seven locks of my head with the web." Do you see now? Samson is getting dangerously near the secret of the Lord when he speaks of that long Nazarite hair, that mark of separation to God. Again she gets him to sleep, and taking those seven locks of hair, she fastens them to the weaver's beam. Then she calls for the third time, "Samson, the Philistines be upon thee!" He leaps to his feet and goes out, not realizing that he is dragging the beam behind him.

In verse fifteen we see how, day after day, she nags him. Every time he says to her, "Delilah, you have such beautiful eyes," she replies, "Yes, but tell me where your great strength lies!" Every time he gives her a compliment, she keeps at it, until the poor man is worn out and in despair he says, "Well, I might just as well tell her." In verse seventeen we read: "He told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man."

Think of a confession like that in her house! Think of a man whose conscience is so dead that under such circumstances he would dare to say, "I am a Nazarite." It is the very thing that Paul says he would never do. Samson had given himself up to the lusts of the flesh,

and yet dared to say, "I have been a Nazarite unto God."

After Delilah sees that she at last has the secret, she makes him sleep again. So we see him, sleeping on the knees of Delilah, just as many a child of God is sleeping on the knees of the world. After he is asleep, she calls a barber and commands him to cut off the seven locks of hair. Samson does not know what is happening, he is so sound asleep. Then she calls him for the fourth time. He springs to his feet, and he does not even miss the Nazarite hair. "He wist not that the Lord was departed from him." What does it mean? It means that he is a "castaway."

Oh, my brother, my sister! What a terrible thing to be said of a Christian—that the Lord has departed!—not that the Spirit of God leaves him, or that Christ gives him up, but that so far as God can use him, his testimony is gone. God says, "I can no longer work through him. I will have to give him up."

So Samson rises up and goes out to shake himself as before, but before he is aware of them, he finds himself helpless in the hands of his enemies, and he is a captive. "But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes." That always happens when a man gets away from God; he loses his sight. I have known men who at one time were mightily used of God, and then sin came into their lives, sin they did not confess to God, and finally He said, "I can no longer use them." The Spirit of God gave them up, and they became "cast-aways." Now when I meet them, they will say, "Well, I don't see things as I used to see them." The Philistines have put out their eyes. There are children of God who are useless to Him because their eyes are out.

Then what happens? Samson becomes a slave of the

Philistines. "(They) bound him with fetters of brass." Where can you get a better picture of the castaway? God has given him up, the Philistines have taken him, his sight is gone, his power is gone, and he is grinding in the prison house. I have seen lots of backsliders like that—once happy with the Lord and once mightily used of God, now grinding in the prison house of the enemies of God.

What a pitiable thing if this were the end, but this is not the last we hear about Samson. Read the next verse: "Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven." And as that long Nazarite hair of his began to come out afresh, Samson must have gone before God in deep sorrow and repentance.

And then comes the day when the Philistines are to celebrate, and they come to the temple of Dagon, after sending word up and down the land; come with great rejoicing to celebrate the victory of Dagon over Jehovah. It is a victory which God Himself has permitted because of Samson's failure to keep his body under. So they come to the temple, a great crowd on the floor, and some in the upper gallery; and there is the image of Dagon, and the priests of Dagon; all of the people are rejoicing to think that their god has more power than Jehovah, the God of the Jews. By doing that, they have taken the matter out of the hands of Samson, and have made it a matter to be settled between God and Dagon. Now God takes up this poor, frail servant, and in answer to his petition permits him to act for Him.

In verse twenty-five we read: "And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison house; and he made them

sport: and they set him between the pillars." Then Samson lifted up his heart to God, and back of that prayer there must have been bitter confession and repentance. "And Samson called unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes." He was appointed by God to destroy the Philistine enemies of God, and now he calls out for one more opportunity to do what he should have done before. As the services are going on, and the Philistines are rejoicing, Samson rests between the pillars and takes one pillar with one arm and one with the other. Suddenly those near him notice that he seems to tighten his grasp on the pillars. Then he bows his shoulders and draws the pillars together; and in a little while all that is heard are the cries of the enemies of God and the rending of the walls as the building comes crashing down. "So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life." A castaway? Yes, but now in mercy restored, and still used for the blessing of his people.

In this day, we wrestle not with flesh and blood; our enemies are not the Philistines. We wrestle with wicked spirits in heavenly places. And how we need to keep right with God so that our spiritual strength may abide in us, that God may use us mightily. If any of us see in Samson the man we might be, let us come to the place of confession, repentance and self-judgment; for God says in I John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Look to God to make you clean and then to use you.

77-1444 Priest
Good Study in work of a High Priest
ALBERT G. JOHNSON

Dr. Albert G. Johnson is pastor of the Hinson
Memorial Baptist Church, Portland, Oregon.

CHAPTER IX

THE MAN AT GOD'S RIGHT HAND

"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Hebrews 9:24). 124

"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Romans 8:34).

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:14-16).

I FEAR that comparatively few Christians really enter into the rich significance of the fact of the present living reality of the Person of Jesus Christ as the Man at God's right hand. The fact of the bodily presence of the Son of God at the Father's right hand is a blessed truth to which apparently the eyes of many are blind, with the consequent loss of much spiritual comfort. To them His humanity is lost in the incomprehensible form of the Being of God.

It is very evident that this is the reason why those who hold such views spiritualize the fact of our Lord's Second Coming. If our Lord is without visible bodily

form now, it follows that reference to His return is spoken of as a spiritual experience, and in no sense as a personal or physical event.

Over and over again the Scriptures refer to the risen and ascended Lord, who is at the Father's right hand in heaven, from whence He will return to consummate all His purposes of redemption.

The disciples saw Him ascend out of their midst as He went up into heaven. Stephen was given a glimpse of Him in the moment of his martyrdom, when he exclaimed, "I see . . . the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." The angels bore witness to His return from heaven "*in like manner*" in which He was seen to enter heaven. The Scriptures affirm that He ascended into heaven in a body, and is to come again from heaven in that body. "*This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*" We logically conclude, then, that He resides now in that same body in heaven, at the Father's right hand. Deity is now enshrined in glorified humanity—the divine and beautiful necessity of the Man at God's right hand!

Be it far from me to minimize the importance of the doctrine of the bodily visible return of Christ to earth, according to His own promise. Notwithstanding, it is possible that the truth of the Lord's Return might eclipse the face of that Man at God's right hand. The Lord's Return is imminent (which does not mean IMMEDIATE).

The revealed truth of the living bodily presence of the Man at God's right hand is the blessed and comforting truth that should occupy our attention now, while we wait for His return from heaven. The Apostle's admonition is to "*set your affection (mind) on things above, not on things on the earth . . . When Christ, who*

is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

The Man at God's right hand sets forth the excellencies of the enthroned Christ, and interprets the magnificence of His official glory as the Mediator—the One appointed for man in things pertaining to God.

Through the parted curtain we are privileged, by the revealed Word, to look into heaven and gaze upon the Man at God's right hand, who has "*entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.*"

Some time ago, a woman, acknowledging her lack of spiritual discernment, said to me, "Where is Jesus Christ now, and what is He doing?" Perhaps no more important questions could be asked, and upon their answer so much of comfort depends during the waiting period before His return to earth to reign and rule.

Let us then give attention to the voice of divine revelation, which answers these very important questions.

There is a Man in heaven NOW! What He is doing there should be of urgent and tender concern to every child of God. This truth is for this hour. In the midst of the present world-confusion, there is little hope as we look out upon the chaos. We therefore look up to the place where Christ is, and from whence He will return.

CHRIST, OUR PRIEST IN HEAVEN

Christ is NOW carrying on in heaven the ministry of a Priest, a continuation of the work He began on earth. As a Priest, He offered up His body and soul on the Cross as a sacrificial offering for sin, and made a perfect and complete atonement for us with His own precious blood. As a Priest, He is NOW sitting at the right hand of God the Father on high, and what He

began actively on earth He continues actively in heaven.

Now the appearance of our Lord in His Mediatorial character in heaven is a deep and blessed truth, an understanding of which should fill our hearts with joy and comfort in this hour.

We now proceed to unfold what the Scriptures reveal concerning the Man at God's right hand, and the mode of His intercession.

Intercession was a chief part of the office of the Jewish high priest, and Christ as the Great High Priest of mankind is declared to be "*able also to save them to the uttermost (completely) that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*" We therefore look for the meaning of His intercession in a different way than that which might be applied to others; His is a richer, higher, nobler ministry which can be understood only in the employment of the unique relationship in which He stands as our Daysman, the God-Man, and the influence of His personal merit as a Saviour in our behalf.

His present heavenly ministry is the complement of His finished earthly work, which found its culmination and perfection in His death and resurrection—two parts of a perfect whole, each the complement of the other.

We are now ready to enter into "*the Holy of Holies,*" so to speak, and to gaze upon our Great High Priest within the veil, to study the mode of His intercession—I trust, to our wonder, love and praise!

The Jewish high priest, on the annual Day of Atonement, after the appointed sacrificial victim had been slain, passed through the veil of the first Sanctuary, and entered into "*the Holy of Holies*" to make intercession for the people. He sprinkled the blood of the slain

victim on the Mercy Seat, and presented the burning incense before the Shekinah, the symbol of the divine Presence; and these significant acts were performed in silence. There was no form of prayer prescribed for the high priest, even on this most solemn occasion; not a word passed his lips; all was done in solemn silence.

Now Jesus, the great Antitype, our Great High Priest, is said to have entered "*into heaven itself, now to APPEAR in the presence of God for us.*" The fact that He *appeared* suggests the mode in which our Lord's intercession is conducted. The expression has its origin in the typical intercession of the Jewish high priest, which was effected not by words but by significant acts. Therefore, we see that Christ's intercessory work is carried on by significant acts, and not by vocal petition, for in the communion of the Godhead, the desires of each divine Person are intuitively known to one another.

We look, then, to the great facts connected with His Mediatorial character, facts that set forth His infinite merit for man, together with an appeal to the infinite power of God. We look for His intercessory work not in words, but in mighty and significant acts.

THE MAN AT GOD'S RIGHT HAND
THE INCARNATE GOD

Jesus, the God-Man, APPEARS in heaven at the Father's right hand, a new wonder in heaven—Christ on the Mediatorial throne as the Incarnate God, in that very nature which suffered and died on the Cross!

"There sits our Saviour crowned with light,
Clothed in a body like our own;
Adoring saints around Him stand,
And thrones and powers before Him fall;
The God shines gracious through the Man,
And sheds sweet glories on them all."

What is the reason for the perpetuation of the Incarnation in heaven? The reason for the continued existence of the human soul and body of Jesus in union with God the Son in heaven we discover as we study the connection between the atonement of Christ on earth and the intercession of Christ in heaven.

The effecting of the atonement required the union of the two natures on earth. The atonement is accomplished! *"It is finished,"* was our Lord's victorious cry! *"Once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."* The atonement is complete! It needs no repetition! Its efficacy is perfect! But now He APPEARS in heaven as the Incarnate God, and His appearance thus has an intercessory effect.

His twofold nature connects Him alike with God and with man, and possessing the nature of both qualifies, He is qualified to be the Mediator between both. He possesses human sympathy, divine love and influence, and Almighty power. These qualities of His glorified Being eloquently appeal on our behalf. As a Priest He offered up His body and soul as a sacrifice for sin, and made a complete atonement on the Cross by His own blood. As a Priest He ascended up on high, passed within the veil, there *"to appear in the presence of God for us."* What He began actively on earth He is carrying on continuously in heaven.

As Man, He is allied to us by nature and sympathy. He acquired, so to speak, these human qualities by His incarnate life as one of us. Being one of us, He APPEARS for us, the representative of and intercessor for the beings whose nature He bears. His glorification has not extinguished His sympathy. He is the *"same Jesus"* who wept over Jerusalem, and at the tomb of Lazarus; and the sympathies of man blend with the attributes

of God. He is still our Kinsman-Redeemer, our Elder Brother. As Son of God, He is the "*beloved Son*" in whom the Father delights, and the holy sympathy and affection of His nature, both human and divine, are pleasing to the Father. Because Christ APPEARS in human nature, His intercession avails for all whose nature He bears.

This is beautifully illustrated by the ministry of Aaron in the Old Testament economy. When Aaron appeared before Jehovah daily to minister as intercessor for all Israel, he bore the names of the Twelve Tribes. The names of the Twelve Tribes were in two sets, and they were engraved on precious stones, and set in "*ouches of gold*," setting forth the preciousness of the souls of the people thus represented in the sight of God. One set of these names was borne upon Aaron's heart, the seat of affection. The other set of names was engraved on two plates (six names on each), and these plates were borne upon his shoulders, the emblem of power. These were united with a chain of pure gold. Thus attired, he appeared each day before God for the people.

How beautifully significant of Christ! In the Father's presence, where He APPEARS for us, He bears our nature, and thus appearing, He represents and advocates our cause—yea, the cause of all our fallen race. The names of all the tribes of humanity are engraved on His heart; His love and power united are employed continually on our behalf. He who APPEARS for us in heaven has the sympathy of a Brother, the influence of a Son, and possesses omnipotent power, together with the God-love. His presence as the Incarnate God speaks eloquently on our behalf, and has intercessory effect.

"The Father hears Him pray,
His dear anointed One;
He cannot turn away
The presence of His Son;
His Spirit answers to the blood,
And tells me I am born of God."

THE MAN AT GOD'S RIGHT HAND
A SACRIFICIAL VICTIM

When the high priest, under the old Jewish dispensation, made intercession for the people on the great Day of Atonement, he took with him a portion of the blood of the sacrificial victim, and sprinkled it on the Mercy Seat seven times. The act of the high priest was significant. The sacrificial victim had been slain; the blood bore witness to its death, and the sprinkled blood on the Mercy Seat had an intercessory effect. So Christ, the Sacrificial Victim for the race, now APPEARS on the Mediatorial throne in a nature that was wounded as an offering for sin, and which still bears upon it the marks of Calvary; thus our Lord is ever presenting Himself as the Sacrificial Victim for us before God the Father. By His appearance in God's presence as the Sacrificial Victim, the atonement which He made upon the Cross is kept continually in remembrance by the very presence of Him who made it.

On the throne, as well as on the Cross, Christ appears as a Sacrificial Victim. John beheld Him as a Lamb that had been slain. *"And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne . . . and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain."* The marks of Calvary are still in evidence. His glory does not conceal His wounds. They proclaim His efficacy as a Saviour, and they plead with God for mankind. His death was not from disease, nor any natural cause, but by violence.

He was put to death in the flesh as a Sacrificial Victim.

Thus the presence of a wounded Saviour in heaven, like the blood of the slaughtered victim sprinkled on the Mercy Seat, proclaims that the atonement is an accomplished fact. The broken law of God has been honored, and justice has received its due. All conditions of the covenant on Christ's part have been performed, and herein lie the reasons which form an efficacious plea that the blessings should be bestowed on every penitent suppliant. The appearance of the "*Lamb that was slain*" speaks more eloquently than words. The blood speaketh, and a just and merciful God heareth. "*And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.*" The blood of Abel cried for vengeance; the blood of Jesus pleads for mercy! The blood of Abel cried for death; the blood of Jesus pleads for life! The blood of Abel drove Cain, the murderer, from the presence of God; the blood of Jesus brings the sinner nigh unto God!

Wesley in his immortal hymn expresses the truth with spiritual discernment:

"Five bleeding wounds He bears.
Received on Calvary;
They poured effectual prayers,
They strongly plead for me:
'Forgive him, O forgive,' they cry,
'Nor let that ransomed sinner die!'"

THE MAN AT GOD'S RIGHT HAND
A RISEN SAVIOUR

He lives, though He died; but He lives to die no more! "*He ever liveth to make INTERCESSION*" for us. Under the Old Testament Jewish economy, no sacrificial victim ever rose from the altar of sacrifice. No

Jewish priest ever evaded death or rose from the dead; but Christ, the Great High Priest of our profession, lives! The Sacrificial Victim rose triumphantly over death, and *"he ever liveth to make INTERCESSION"* for us. He is the risen Lord, in possession of immortal life!

While Jesus was here in human flesh, He was both naturally and legally immortal. He was not subject to death on His own account. The divine law declared that death is the penalty for sin. Now, since Christ was sinless, He was by His very nature, as the sinless One, free from the penalty of sin, which is death.

The same divine law which declared that death was the penalty of sin declared also that he who kept the law should live. *"Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the Lord."* Paul said, *"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

Divine justice calls for the death sentence on the sinner, the offender, the lawbreaker; but at the same time it offers the reward of life to the perfect and holy. Our Lord was holy! In His perfect life and sacrificial death, He fulfilled the law, and met its every righteous claim and just demand. In so doing, He is the One, and the ONLY One, entitled to the reward which the divine law promised to perfect obedience. Thus, He lives in the possession and power of an endless life. This immortal life of which He is in possession is His right, both by nature and by law, and this is maintained by the very justice of God.

THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL

While Jesus was in the possession of life and immortality by nature and law, He voluntarily surrendered the

right and gave up His life as "*a ransom (instead of others) for many.*" Though "*the wages of sin is death, the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*" This is the reason for His death! He freely gave His life. He said, "*No man taketh (my life) from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.*" Though He gave His life, the free gift of love, He freely took it again, and He now APPEARS in heaven as the risen Saviour in possession of immortal life. And this great fact proclaims the perfection and efficacy of His sacrificial death.

The law demanded absolute holiness in the character of the Sacrificial Victim, and had there been the least defect, the Sacrifice would have been inadequate. Therefore, the requirements of the divine law would not have been met. Death would have held Him a victim, and all hopes of salvation would have been entombed forever in the gloomy sepulcher. The demands of divine justice were fully met; justice had to release the prisoner, and on the resurrection side of the tomb He exclaimed, "*I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore.*"

In the appearance of the risen Saviour in heaven, we have a demonstration of the perfection of His character, and because He is God the Son, there is an infinitude of merit in that atonement. Since His sacrifice was perfect, full atonement has been made, and salvation is now available for every penitent believer in Christ.

In the death of Christ, the divine law and His righteous government have been fully maintained without the slightest compromise of the divine character. God is "*just, and the justifier of him which believeth in*

Jesus." And the appearance of the Risen Sacrifice in heaven presents an unanswerable argument why a righteous God should pardon and "*save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*"

"*He ever liveth.*" These truths are forcibly presented throughout the book of Hebrews, by contrast. Under the Old Jewish economy, "*By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue* BY REASON OF DEATH: *but this man, because he CONTINUETH EVER, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make INTERCESSION for them.*"

There is never a moment when His intercessory presence is suspended. There can never come a time when His intercessory work will be diminished. "*He ever liveth.*" Millions throughout past generations have availed themselves of His work on their behalf, and millions continue to do so, even to this hour.

THE MAN AT GOD'S RIGHT HAND APPEARS IN THE PRESENCE OF DIVINE HOLINESS

Adam fled from the presence of God. All sinful beings, awakened to the awfulness of the divine holiness, flee from His presence. In the judgment of the Great White Throne the wicked will call for the rocks to hide them "*from the face of him that sitteth on the throne.*" The first great attribute of God revealed to man is His holiness. The symbolism and ritual of the old economy were a forceful and continual remembrance of this fact. When the prophet Isaiah saw the Lord "*high and lifted up,*" he cried out his own unworthi-

ness: "*Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.*" Another cried out in dreadful realization of the divine holiness, even in the days of His humiliation, "*Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.*" Sinful beings shun the presence of divine holiness.

Deep mystery, indeed! Of this Holy One it is affirmed, "*For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*" The final issue of sin reached its climax in Immanuel's orphan cry, "*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*" Yet here is One who not amenable to death on His own account, as we have seen, bore the sins of the whole world and was forsaken in death.

Has the Victim been rejected? Never! He lives! "*He ever liveth*"—the Man at God's right hand!

"Look, ye saints, the sight is glorious,
See the Man of Sorrows now;
From the fight returned victorious,
Every knee to Him shall bow!"

He appears amid the splendors of divine majesty, dwelling in the refulgent brightness of the divine favor, high above all, reinstated in the glory which He enjoyed with the Father before the worlds were—the object of worship! His presence there for us is the divine attestation to the perfection of His character, the efficacy of His atonement, and the Father's full satisfaction in the redemptive work of His Son.

He fills the highest place that heaven affords. Though He is our Mediator, He is also our Representative. He is there, Deity enshrined in glorified humanity. How

infinitely tender it is declared of Him, "*He is not ashamed to call them brethren.*" John says, "*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him.*" We shall in glory participate in the blessedness and exaltation of our Saviour in a degree suitable to our capacity. Then shall His prayer be answered, "*Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me.*"

John Wesley, with spiritual insight, expresses the truth when he sings:

"Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
'Midst flaming worlds, in these array'd,
With joy shall I lift up my head.

"Bold shall I stand in Thy great day,
For who aught to my charge shall lay?
Fully absolved through these I am—
From sin and fear, from guilt and shame.

"Lord, I believe Thy precious blood,
Which, at the mercy seat of God,
Forever doth for sinners plead,
For me, e'en for my soul, was shed."

There is one other fact that sets forth in beautiful imagery the intercessory work of the Man at God's right hand, namely—

THE OFFERING OF INCENSE

The incense was a compound of several "*sweet spices*" which were gathered and prepared according to God's direction, and when burned gave out a fragrant odor. The priest made intercession for the people by the presentation of incense in the presence of the symbol

of divine holiness, the Shekinah. Twice each day he entered into the Holy Place to burn incense before the Lord; and on the annual Day of Atonement he entered with the incense into the Holy of Holies. He would take fire from the Altar with a golden censer; into this fire he would cast a portion of the sweet-spice incense, and as the delightfully fragrant odor ascended, he would stand before the Mercy Seat in order that the cloud of incense might mingle with the symbol of the divine Presence enthroned above the wings of the cherubim. So Jesus, as the Angel of the Covenant, is represented as offering much incense in a golden censer with the prayers of the saints. As the high priest offered no vocal prayers, the ascending incense stood in their place, and as the incense was presented, and the fragrance rose upwards, the congregation offered up their supplications in the Outer Court.

The incense represented the odor of our Saviour's prayers offered while here on earth, blended with the fragrance of His pure and sinless life. Thus the prayers of the Man at God's right hand, together with the fragrance of His beautiful and perfect life of obedience, are as incense before the Father in heaven above. Their influence will endure forever. How comforting to know that our poor and ineffectual prayers in themselves are blended with the rich and effectual incense of His intercession, and as bank notes duly signed, obtain a value which they do not have in themselves!

This is the meaning of such expressions in relation to prayer, as "in His Name," and "for His sake." He obtains for our prayers a hearing, acceptance and favor before the throne of God. When the high priest had finished his sacrificial work and lifted up his hands to bless the people, the fire came down from heaven, and the

glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle as a visible proof to all the people that their high priest's work was availing. Likewise the Holy Spirit descended in power and glory at the ascension of the Man at God's right hand, to show to His people that His intercession prevails, and avails for all who "*come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them*"—until His Return.

THE BOLD AND SAFE APPROACH

Who can estimate the extent of God's forbearance towards sinners? People ask, "Why does God not do something in this frightful hour?" Were it not for the Man at God's right hand, and His intercession, a reign of divine justice would give way to the present reign of forbearance and mercy. The judgments of God today are corrective and disciplinary. Notwithstanding, such judgments become destructive when the ministrations of mercy are spurned and have proved in vain. God still waits to be gracious, but let us not forget that there will come a moment when mercy will give place to justice, when the meekness and forbearance of the divine Presence becomes a devouring fire of judgment, without mercy—and in such an hour, "*who shall abide the wrath of the Lamb?*"

His reign is a rule of mercy and grace for this world. It is by virtue of Christ's present intercession that the existence of the rebellious is prolonged; that lukewarm Christians and churches are given longer respite; that sinners and unfaithful professing Christians are extended mercy. He waits to be gracious. It is because of His priestly work and intercession that judgment is delayed, and "*the wrath of the Lamb*" against the Christ-rejecting is still postponed.

Another benefit of the intercession of the Great High Priest is the general encouragement in prayer. Approach to God is now safe—yea, even welcome, because of Him who is our Advocate, "*Jesus Christ the righteous.*" There is no fiery presence now as at Sinai; there are no legal barriers existing between the soul and God. We, as "*priests unto God,*" may ask for ourselves and for others in His Name. The Father delights to honor the Son. "*Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh: and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*"

What an encouragement in temptation! "*For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*" "*Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.*"

What are thy sorrows, afflictions, or persecutions? In Christ, the living One, you have the sympathy of a Brother and the help of an Almighty Friend—One who understands. "In every pang that rends the heart, the Man of Sorrows had a part."

"Come, ye disconsolate, where'er ye languish;
Come to the mercy seat, fervently kneel;
Here bring your wounded hearts, here tell your anguish;
Earth has no sorrows that heaven cannot heal."

What an unspeakable comfort, my friends, to remember that our High Priest is in heaven! He never

forgets us; He ever lives to make intercession for us. Use Him regularly; keep nothing from Him. I believe the impoverishment of the average Christian life results from a neglect of coming to Christ as our Mediator. We think, and rightly so, of the value of Christ's death in relation to the guilt and penalty of sin, but not enough of His present priestly office and intercessory life, for our continual cleansing from sin's defilement and for spiritual health. Use Him regularly as a fountain of spiritual refreshment, "that thy soul may prosper in the faith."

In His present priestly office He waits to hear the daily confessions of His saints, and to grant daily absolution from sins. He waits to sympathize in all our troubles, to guide in all our perplexities, to strengthen us for all of life's duties, and to preserve us in all our temptations. What else can the words mean which follow the description of our High Priest in heaven, appearing on our behalf? *"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."*

"Day and night, the accuser makes no pause,
Day and night protests the righteous laws;
God and evil witness to man's flaws,
Man the culprit, man's the ruined cause;
Man midway to death's devouring jaws,
And the worm that gnaws.

"Day and night our Jesus makes no pause,
Pleads His own fulfillment of all laws;
Veils with His perfections mortal flaws,
Clears the culprit, pleads the desperate cause,
Plucks the dead from death's devouring jaws,
And the worm that gnaws."

ROBERT G. LEE

Dr. Robert G. Lee is one of the truly great preachers of the Southern Baptist Convention. He is pastor of the great Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee and is the author of some twenty books, including *Glory Today for Conquest Tomorrow*, *This Critical Hour*, *Proximities of Calvary*, etc.

CHAPTER X

THE ONLY BEGOTTEN OF THE FATHER

"The only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18).

"God sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him" (I John 4:9).

JESUS HAS many names — all of them great names, names transcendentally meaningful. And not the least, but among the greatest, of the names He has is "The Only Begotten Son." "Father" is an official title designating activities. So also is "Son" an official title designating activities. "Father," meaning source, refers to the infinite, eternal and invisible Source of all. "Son" means that which, carrying forward omnipotently and omnisciently and omnipresently, expresses the Father. All that the Father ever *has* done, *is* doing, and *will* do is through the sinless Son—the objectification of Deity, the executive of Deity. The Father's holiness, the Father's love, the Father's shepherd heart, the Father's redeeming compassion were mightily and beautifully manifest in Christ's earthly life. Everything that Jesus—the living, dying, rising-again Word of God—did in the days of His flesh spoke of the heart of Him with whom He was coexistent, coequal, coeternal, coessential. Jesus

was the Light—God seen; the Word—God heard; the Life—God felt.

Consider the Only Begotten of the Father in the glory of his—

I. PREINCARNATION

He had glory with God before the world was—and was loved by the Father before the foundation of the world (John 17:5, 24). His life on earth was a momentous episode between two eternities—the one reaching back before all worlds, the other forward forever. Before “by faith Abraham . . . went out, not knowing whither he went,” Jesus’ will was the law of angels and archangels in the midst of the glories of heaven. And He Himself said: “Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58).

Before the infant earth lay, wrapped in swaddling clothes of light, in the arms of the great Jehovah, Jesus was the central sun which guided the hosts of heaven. Before, on earth, any flowers ever bloomed, before any fountains gushed forth liquid blessings, before any stars ever shone in the sky like glowing embers on hearthstones of blue, the heaven of heavens was “filled with the odors of His life-giving essence.” Before the sun shone forth from his tabernacle in the heavens, before any fires burned in dark corners and continents of chaos, before the phosphorescent foam of surging seas gleamed in the light of the full moon, pinned like a huge cameo on the breast of the sky, “all the hosts of heaven were upborne on the swelling tide of His unfolding perfections.” Before the first ray of light sped forth like some flaming archangel with garments afire across the uncharted dark, Jesus “emitted and absorbed all the glory of the eternal past” and this is He who had pre-

eminence in creative power, having no associate in creating the universe — which is a vast autograph album, made up of motes and mountains and molecules, atoms and seas with islands studded, with Christ's signature written everywhere, in every corner of every continent. That creation in concept is the product of His wisdom we learn when we read:

"All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3).

That creation in its wondrous perfection is the product of the power of Him "who spoke and it was so, who commanded and it stood fast," we acknowledge when we read:

"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Col. 1:16-17).

That Jesus, "whom (God) hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds," is at the center and the circumference, as the one who hath all power in heaven and earth, we assert when we read:

"Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power" (Heb. 1:3).

And, with the four and twenty elders who "fall down before him . . . and worship him that liveth for ever and ever," we would say:

"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (Rev. 4:11).

Consider, too, the Only Begotten of the Father as the subject, the fulfillment, of—

II. PROPHECY

To the two on the road to Emmaus, who were "slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken," Jesus, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets . . . expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27).

To those who looked upon him through Jewish eyes of malicious enmity, Jesus said:

"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. There is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me" (John 5:39, 45-46).

And Abraham, talking to the rich man in hell, said: "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them" (Luke 16:29).

Foolish are we if we forget that the Old Testament and the New Testament alike tell of Jesus. Of the whole inerrant Word of God truly it can be said that Christ, the Glory of God, "(doth) lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Verily the Old Testament conceals Christ and the New Testament reveals Christ. Just as the Old Testament *infolds* Christ, the New Testament *unfolds* Christ. The Old Testament promises Christ, the New Testament presents Christ. The Old Testament pictures Christ, the New Testament produces Christ. The Old Testament prophesies Christ, the New New Testament proclaims Christ. The Old Testament localizes Christ, the New Testament universalizes Christ. The Old Testament symbolizes Christ, the New Testament sacrifices Christ. The Old Testament is law which

Christ fulfilled, the New Testament is love, which Christ exhibited. The Name of Jesus, the Supreme Personality, the center of a world's desire, is on every page—in expression, or symbol, or prophecy, or psalm, or proverb. Through the Bible, the Name of Jesus runs like a line of glimmering light. The thought of Jesus, literature's loftiest ideal and philosophy's highest personality and criticism's supremest problem and theology's fundamental doctrine and spirituality's cardinal necessity, threads the great Book as a crystal river winds its way through a continent.

All the Bible's analogies, all the Bible's types, all the Bible's pictures, all the Bible's truths, are so related to Christ that Christ alone explains them. And the explanation is filled with such perfection of harmony in every detail—the relationship between them and our Lord Jesus is so strikingly self-evident—that any discussion of it would be useless. No one ought to have to argue to get folk to see that the diversified and systematic sacrifices of the Jews, the significant shadows of redemptive entity still ahead, the adumbrations of a substance yet to come, were elemental, preparatory, rudimentary, introductory—and pointed to Christ, the propellent Center to which the faith of mankind, before and since, gravitated. The promises to fallen man in Eden and the ceremonies of Judaism mean Christ. The music of Israel's sweetest harps and the light that burns in prophecy mean Christ. Jesus is the vital substance that gives meaning to the Bible's genealogies, meaning to its histories, meaning to its chronologies. Take Jesus out of the Bible and it would be like taking calcium out of lime, carbon out of diamonds, truth out of history, invention out of fiction, matter out of physics, mind out of metaphysics, numbers out of mathematics.

For the Jesus of prophecy is the secret of its unity, its strength, its beauty. And all the prophecies read, since Jesus came, more like history than prophecy—more like a description of events already done than a declaration of events yet to be.

Now think of the Only Begotten of the Father—

III. PRESENTED

Isaiah, the evangelist of the Old Testament, in whose preaching was the growl of the Assyrian wolf, wrote:

"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14).

Thus did the Prophet tell how He would be presented to the world as the unspeakable Gift of God's love. The Incarnate Son of God entered into a body of flesh that He might render to God adequate penance and sorrow for the sins of men, that He might adequately compensate God's government by an equivalent to man's offense and offer mercy abundantly in consistence with divine integrity.

Born in a barn amid cattle was He—and at a time when religion and idolatry were not only lovers but affectionate bedfellows. He who is called the Desire of all nations was born when "the scepter was frozen with the tyranny of impeached civilizations." Born in a little town which has been called "a weed patch by Roman highways" while Athens, the intellectual center of the world, was drunk with the wine of skepticism, His birth was not marked by clocks and calendars. Jesus, in whom was life, and that life the light of men, was of the Virgin born when old Persia had on her brow a funeral wreath—born when old sleepy Egypt was on

the way to becoming a shabby sexton of splendid tombs. This compassionate Christ who, grown to manhood, wept over Jerusalem, was born when the Coliseum, stained with human blood, "typed the cruelty of the heart of the Roman Empire"—an empire believing itself to be invulnerably bulwarked in every part.

This virgin-born Christ, His entrance into the realm of human flesh by a virgin's womb being the seal of the Father's approval affixed to the claims Jesus made as the Only Begotten of the Father, was presented as God's will, God's thought, God's purpose swathed in mortality—His every nerve divine handwriting, His every bone divine sculpture, His every muscle a pulley divinely swung, His every breath divine whisper, His every heart-beat divine pulsation, His every cry divine wooing.

In view of the truth that Jesus was Head of the human race and responsible for its creation, is it not most difficult to understand how any person can deny His miraculous conception? Was it not a necessity and His own desire to be conceived, to be born, to pass through the stages of human growth? Was not the virgin birth the most natural and most sacred way to enter the world? Know men not that the natural procreative force of mankind produces new persons, but not so in the case of Jesus? Know ye not, ye scholars, ye doubting physicians, that no new person came into existence with His conception and birth? Know ye not, ye readers of the Scriptures, that He was already existing as the Son of God when He entered into the experience of mankind? Know ye not that this Christ who was ages older than His mother, was, in His Incarnation, embodied in human flesh, demonstrated in human life, exemplified in human action, crystallized in human form? Know ye not, ye who have heard much preach-

ing, that the Only Begotten of the Father, given in grace for our redemption, linked His deity with our humanity (apart from sin) and was thus God and man in one adorable Person?

Now give thought, please, to the Only Begotten of the Father in—

IV. PAIN

"A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," He said on one occasion, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (Matt. 26:38)—a sorrow far beyond Paul's "great heaviness and continual sorrow" of heart. Behold, and see if there be any pain like unto His pain—pain wherewith the Lord afflicted Him in the day of His fierce anger, when sin was ordered to execution in the Person of the Only Begotten of the Father.

Pain was His because He was "not of the world," yet was "sent into the world"—the world uncongenial and hostile—sent from an assembly seraphic to an assembly diabolic, from the songs of angels to the hoots of mobs, from the hallelujahs around God's throne to the hell-brewed hissing of Satanic assault in the wilderness, from the worshiping hails of heaven to the killing nails of earth, from the throngs that acclaimed Him worthy of praise and honor and worship to the groups which found Him deserving of death.

Pain was His because of the misunderstandings all along the way—misunderstandings which sharpened the thorns of His only earthly crown as those nearest and dearest misconstrued Him.

In pain was He—pain of soul—because men were unresponsive to the magnanimity of His nature—because men were blind to the beauty of His character—because they were deaf to the significance of His teaching—be-

cause they were ungrateful in the presence of His ministries of mercy—because He saw behind the loveliest scenes of village and city and countryside the hearts of people smitten with sin, burdened with care, wrung with anguish. In pain often was He—because of men's lack of faith. Pained with the abuses of men. Pained by the agony of Gethsemane. Pained by the fists of men that beat Him. Pained by the fingers that pulled out His beard. Pained by the scourge that seamed His quivering flesh to the bone. Pained by the thorns that punctured His brow. Pained by the palms that slapped Him. Pained by the nails that pinioned Him to the Cross. Pained by the pangs of thirst. Pained by the sorrows of His soul. Pained by the tortures of Calvary. Traveling the painful road from Edom with dyed garments, from Bozrah, glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength, He re-trod the way of man's retreat, opened the way to the tree of life, liquidated the bond of inexorable law, sheathed the sword of justice behind the blood-drenched Mercy Seat. Pained when He gave His body to the Cross. Pained when He made His sinless soul an offering for our sins. Pained when He was "made a curse for us." Pained when He who knew no sin was made sin in our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

"O the cruel pain He bore,
When the crown of thorns He wore."

In pain was He because of the hostile forces that allied themselves against Him—hostile forces of hate deployed from the Sanhedrin, detailed from the standing army, the vagabonds of the streets joining men from Caesarean palaces in venting their spite against Him. Was not Bethlehem, place of His birth, against Him?

And Nazareth—place of His toil? And Capernaum—place of His miraculous healing? And Jerusalem—with evil girt with diadem inside her walls? And Galilee—where His ministries were as rains in drouth-smitten lands? Yes, all these. And, besides, the courts. Moreover, the army. And Rome, too, and the world also. And all hell.

“Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered” (Heb. 5:8).

In life, His enemies, setting their pickets to watch Him, hounded His every step. They saw into which house He went—and when He came out. They watched what He ate—and how much. They saw what He drank—and how much. They knew with whom He stayed—and how long. They heard what He said—and lied about the intent thereof.

At last the most dreadfully painful suffering of all came—at Calvary, where all the furies of hell and all the hatreds of earth joined their wicked hearts and murderous hands in unholy alliance to do Him to death. There by His pain of body and pain of soul culminating in awful death, He purchased our redemption—purchased us who believe *off* the slave market so that we can never be put up for sale again. Coming from a throne to a footstool, from the top of glory to the bottom of humiliation, He let wicked men thrust the lances of pain through His vitals for us—for us, hell-deserving sinners all. As someone has said, though I may somewhat take from or somewhat add to his words:

He came and wrapped Himself in all the agonies which we deserve for our misdoings. He stood at the point where all earthly and infernal hostilities charged on Him at once with keen sabers—our SUBSTITUTE.

When did ever attorney endure so much for a pauper client? When did ever physician suffer so much for patient in the lazaretto? When did mother ever suffer so much to bring a child into the world? When did any suffering ever equal the pain of soul and the pain of body which Christ suffered for us—for you—for me? The thunderbolts struck Him from above, hurricane after hurricane of pain, cyclone after cyclone of pain, when, all the worlds witnessing, He paid the price, the bitter price, the transcendent price, the awful price, the glorious price, the infinite price, the eternal price that sets us free.

Knowing that he died a spiritual death as well as a physical death, founding our joy in the deep bitterness of His own soul, we say—

“See, from His hands, His head, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e’er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?”

And we, saved from wrath through Him, recall that in love—

“Out from the realm of the glory light
Into the far-away land of night,
Out from the bliss of worshipful song
Into the pain of hatred and wrong,
Out from the holy rapture above
Into the grief of rejected love,
Out from the life at the Father’s side
Into the death of the crucified,
Out of high honor and into shame
The Master willingly, gladly came.”

And now give thought to the Only Begotten of the Father as One—

V. PLACED

"He was buried." The body of Him who, before He was made flesh, placed the pillars of the earth in their sockets, was placed in the grave. The body of Him who, before He "was made of a woman," placed the whirling worlds in their places, was placed in the tomb where, for the first time in thirty-three years, the cruel world left Him alone. And, let us ask, who were present at the placement in the tomb of the body marred and scarred with the stigmata of the Cross? Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man, who owned the tomb. He it was who asked Governor Pilate for the body. He it was who took the body, not a bone of it broken, and washed the dirt and spit and blood and dust therefrom. Then, in the presence of Nicodemus (the same who came to Jesus by night), in the presence of women, the body was wrapped in clean linen and perfumes, and placed in the tomb which the Roman Government sealed—afraid that the disciples would come and steal the body and *play* resurrection. A regiment of soldiers from the Tower of Antonia was detailed to guard that mausoleum. At the door of that tomb a fight took place which decided the question for all graveyards and cemeteries. Sword of lightning against sword of steel. Angel of God against military. God against Rome.

But He was not placed there *permanently*. "Up from the grave He arose." He shattered His tomb so that it can never be rebuilt. All the trowels and masonry of earth cannot mend it. Forever and forever it is a broken tomb. The King of Terror must go down before the King of Grace. For Jesus, "the Ancient of days," "cut off in the midst of his days," resumed His power, recovered His challenged rights, regained His waning in-

fluence, reasserted His sacred grandeur, sent down the ages the blest assurance that He who was born in denial of the laws of life was raised from the dead in defiance of the laws of death.

Think now of the Only Begotten of the Father as the One—

VI. PREACHED

"Preached unto the Gentiles." Yes. And "believed on in the world." Preached—by men with hearts on fire and tongues aflame. Preached—by apostles daring dungeons and defying the oppressors of the truth. Preached—by men who preferred the duty they owed to God to any danger that might come from men. Preached—with rattle of chain and creak of torture rack. Preached—with fervor by loving hearts, though the fires of the stake threatened. Preached—with love, though scourging whips were ready for the using. Preached—with faithfulness, though rotten eggs and dead cats, on occasions, were thrown. Preached—though the preachers were hissed at, laughed at, maltreated at whipping posts, and made to rot in sunless dungeons, dark and dank and deadly. Preached—from behind prison bars. Preached—from the midst of martyr's flames. Preached—from the blood-stained sands of murderous arenas. Preached—before slaves. Preached—before kings and rulers. Preached—"from Greenland's icy mountains to India's coral strand." Preached—where the Eskimos feed on putrid blubber amid the ice floes of the North. Preached—where Chinamen feed on rats in Hongkong. Preached—where cannibals drink human blood out of human skulls. Preached—where African Hottentots wear no clothes and know no shame. Preached—where Indian worshipers of turtles burn wives on their husbands' funeral

pile. Preached—where savages utter their wild war whoops. Preached—where Chinese opium sots make of themselves beasts of the lowest type. Preached—where Korean demon worshipers make the night hideous with their cries. Preached—where Confucian scholars grope in the dark. Preached—where Mohammedan fanatics call from their towers to prayer. Preached—where assemble the poor to whom a crust is a feast. Preached—where meet the rich, oft poor in spiritual wealth. Preached—where the streets of Sodom are filled with riotous throngs. Preached—where many are content with the religion of the organ and the aisle. Preached in the first century—Judaism declined. Preached in the third, fourth and fifth centuries—and pagan philosophy was conquered. Preached in the seventeenth century—and French skepticism was conquered. Preached in the eighteenth century—and English deism met defeat. Preached in this century—and the tides of materialism—materialism which would reduce the supernatural to ignorance—will not rise so high. Preached in Virginia—and John Albert Broadus, yielding his will to Christ at sixteen, stays on double duty as preacher and educator all his days, and sings with his last whispered breath, "Jesus, Lover of my soul."

Preached in Puerto Rico—and, as we are told, a policeman, Delfino Muler, is saved, and then becomes an evangelist with his tongue catching fire from a heart that burned fervently.

Preached in British America—and Benjamin Cameron, the Indian, who in his savage days had shot and had eaten his own wife, as Villiers tells us, is born again—and goes forth to greet every stranger with the question: "Are you a Christian? Do you love my Saviour? Will you give me your hand if you do?"

Preached in New Guinea—and Ruatoka, himself born a heathen, by faith sees Christ's wounded hands and feet, repents and believes and is saved. Then he writes to the London Missionary Society, even as we read in "Hurry Call," regarding the cannibals who had murdered Chalmers: "I ask of you a great privilege—permit me to go to the place where he was killed, and tell his murderers about the love of God in Christ."

Preached in the Philippines where many, knowing not the liberating truth of Christ, are in bondage to relics and friars—and Si Loy becomes a Baptist deacon who cries out, when mobbed and beaten, "I can not strike back; for there is a great love in my heart."

Preached in Japan where there are agile seekers for the world's trade and military powers that seek world-domination—and some have solemnly sworn to devote their entire time and talents to Christ's cause.

Preached in China where millions were slaves of a long and drowsy past—and many turn their eyes from the tombs of their ancestors and their gods to the Cross and to the Christ of that Cross.

Preached in Africa where Livingstone held out emaciated hands toward Christ, where Burns and Camphor made themselves meet for the fellowship of martyrs—and over that African highway, marked by the tombstones of martyr missionaries, Ethiopia stumbles with outstretched hands toward God.

Preached in India with its millions of gods and dire poverty—and Krishua Pal, a carpenter, became Carey's first Hindu convert who—later—wrote a hymn in which are the words:

"O thou, my soul, forget no more
The Friend who all thy sorrows bare."

Preached in Mexico where multitudes of dark-faced people, held back by centuries of illiteracy, and clouded by agelong superstitions, came to know the sweetness of the words of the Christ: "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Preached in lanes, in alleys, in country sides, in mines, in villages, in cities—and many have come out of their bondage, their sorrow, their night, into Christ's freedom, Christ's gladness, Christ's light—"out of the depths of ruin untold, into the peace of Christ's sheltering fold." But why say more? All the words of all languages, most skillfully combined and most eloquently spoken, can express only a meager measure of the wonder contained in the words, "Preached unto the Gentiles."

But now, in conclusion, let us give thought to the Only Begotten of the Father as—

VII. PRE-EMINENT

"And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preëminence" (Col. 1:18).

"He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all" (John 3:31).

"Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen" (Rom. 9:5). Pre-eminent in preincarnate glory—this Christ. Pre-eminent in creative power—this Christ. Pre-eminent in redemption—showing how His infinite holiness could be reconciled to embrace the unclean—this Christ! Pre-eminent as the revealer of God—this Christ—expressing the soul of God with entire precision and finality. "He that hath seen me hath seen the

Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?" (John 14:9). "God was in Christ." "God manifest in the flesh" was Jesus. And let us never forget that without Christ, the revealer of God, as Saviour and Lord, man is a failure, the world is a carcass, and eternity is a vast horror.

Phenomenally pre-eminent this Christ in all things—by the purpose and will and power of God. You can match every good man the world has ever known with one or more equally as great or good. Homer of the Greeks was great, reaching from pole to pole with the wings of his poetic fancy. But you can match him with Virgil who wielded a pen that ploughed its way as far as Homer's wings of fancy could fly. Demosthenes, the silver-tongued orator of Greece, finds his equal in Cicero, the Roman. Edmund Burke whose impeachment speech withered all the flowers of hope in Warren Hasting's garden is equaled or surpassed by Henry Grady who, at the New England banquet, reminded people of an animated aurora with all the variations of a luminous sunset, and by William Jennings Bryan whose words were flights of golden arrows. Dante, whose ears heard hell's infernal drums roll the eternal bass in hell's uproar, beating time to the ceaseless groans of the lost, in the hot breath of hell's inferno, runs not one step ahead of Milton, the blind Baptist bard, whose ears were attuned to the hallelujah choruses of heaven. Shakespeare, from whose pen words dropped like golden pollen from the stems of shaken lilies, has his place disputed by Bacon, one of the greatest intellects of centuries. Tennyson, with his "Crossing the Bar," has a high pedestal. But, along beside him is Longfellow with his "Psalm of Life." Scotland lifts up her voice in praise to Walter Scott, whose pen was a Niagara of power. But in the

same breath they praise with as great joy and honor Robert Burns whose pen seemed to be a golden cage from which choruses of nightingales and sobbing angels were imprisoned and let loose.

Among preachers, Wesley whose prescription for good health was a little more work, stands in equal splendor with Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards who threw revival fires that burned out the dross of nations. Spurgeon was great. And Carroll, the theological juggernaut. But so also was Henry Ward Beecher who let all the bells in his belfry ring for God. So was Broadus whom God kept on double duty as teacher and preacher for half a century. Alexander conquers the world. But so does Caesar. Napoleon was a great general. But he is defeated at Waterloo by Wellington. You may put side by side—Plato and Socrates, Peter and Paul, Savonarola and Chrysostom, Luther and Wycliffe, Cromwell and Pitt, Lincoln and Lee, Beethoven and Mendelssohn, Angelo and Millet, Molly Pitcher and Grace Darling, Florence Nightingale and Ann Hasseltine, Rogers and Cobb, John Guogh and Sam Jones, Lindberg and Wiley Post, Frances Willard and Henrietta Hall Shook. There is no name so great in the history of the world that it may not be equaled by another.

But when we mention Jesus, there is no one to stand beside Him. He stands alone—august, unique, supreme. He is forever the great unlike. His Name is above every name and with Him no mortal can compare among the sons of men. Charles Lamb was right who said: "If all the illustrious men were gathered together and Shakespeare should enter their shining company, they would all rise to do him honor. But, if Jesus Christ should come, we would all kneel to WORSHIP Him."

"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:6-11).

With these words on our tongues, with these and many other thoughts in our minds, let me ask how large a place you have given to this wonderful Christ in your own life. He *died* for you; do you *live* for Him? Love brought Jesus from the right hand of the eternal Father—love for us in the grips of the fell disease of sin, and took Him to the Cross to pay the price for our redemption. Christ was smitten; we are shielded. Christ was lacerated; we are liberated. Christ was slain; we are secured. Christ's was the judgment; ours is the joy. Christ's was the condemnation; ours is the justification. Is it nothing to you that the Lord of life and glory should suffer all this for you? How can men have the heart to reject such a Lover of their souls? How can men and women treat with callousness the scenes of Christ's sacrifice on Calvary? How can men treat Calvary's sacrifice as if it were a secondary matter to be attended to or not according to their own convenience?

I pray you to seek the Lord while He may be found, and to settle the question of your salvation once and for all—before your chances be gone forever. Say to your soul, say to earth, say to hell, say to heaven, that

for your weariest day, Christ shall be your stay—that
for the darkest night Christ shall be your light—that
for the weakest hour Christ shall be your power—that
for each moment's call Christ shall be your all. Then,
in life and death, in time and eternity, no regrets will
ever beset your heart.

V. G. Oak
Pidea

CLARENCE EDWARD MACARTNEY

Dr. Clarence Edward Macartney is the active and popular pastor of the great First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, Pa. He is the author of a host of best-selling books, including *Sons of Thunder*, *Peter and His Lord*, *Six Kings of the American Pulpit*, etc.

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CHAPTER XI

REPENTANCE

"Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21).

THIS IS a sentence from the most beautiful and exquisite farewell address ever delivered, except that by our Lord Himself to His disciples on the same night on which He was betrayed. St. Paul was hurrying up to Jerusalem in order to get there in time for the Feast of Pentecost. His ship sailed from Troas on the coast of Asia Minor, and by one-day journeys stopped at Assos, Mitylene, Chios, Samos, and came at length to Miletus. Paul wanted to say farewell to the elders of the Church at Ephesus, where he had had his longest, and, in some respects, most notable, ministry. But instead of disembarking and taking the time to go up to Ephesus, he summoned the elders of the Church to meet him at the port of Miletus, sixty miles south of Ephesus.

Miletus today, like so many of those great cities of Asia Minor where Paul lived and preached, is a desolation. All that remains is the almost perfectly preserved Greek theater; but the actors are all gone, their voices are silenced. All that one hears today is the sound of the wind in the reeds and the call of the storks which

build their nests in the ruins. Sitting on the topmost pier of the seats of that Greek theater, it is not difficult to create again the scene of Paul's farewell. The ship is moored close to the shore, and down at the water-front St. Paul, surrounded by his friends from Ephesus, delivers to them his beautiful farewell. He reviews his life among them at Ephesus, how he had coveted no man's silver or gold and had supported himself by the toil of his own hands; how for three years he had not ceased to warn everyone of them night and day with tears; how he had declared to them the whole counsel of God, and how publicly, and from house to house, he had preached repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ.

Whenever I preach on this subject of "Repentance," I am well nigh overcome with wonder at it. How wonderful a thing repentance is! What if Christ had come to call only the righteous to Himself, and not sinners to repentance! What if God would let us sin, but would not let us repent! What if He would let us fall, but would not put out His hand to lift us up again! What if He would let us wander into a far country, but would not permit us to come to ourselves and start the homeward journey to our Father's house! What if He had let the dying thief mock Him and curse Him, but had not let him pray for a place in Paradise! What if Christ had let Peter curse Him and deny Him, but had not looked upon him and let him weep the tears of repentance! What if God permitted us to do the worst, and be the worst, and yet did not permit us to desire and resolve to be the best and do the best! Yes; great, passing great, is the wonder and beauty of repentance. It is repentance which makes the Gospel a message of joy; and although in heaven there must be a great many

things to wonder at and rejoice over, our Lord said that one thing which causes more joy among the inhabitants of heaven than anything else is the repentance of a sinner.

It is not my purpose, however, to talk in general or abstract terms about repentance, but rather to demonstrate it and illustrate it by some of those great instances of repentance which we have in the Bible. What the Scriptures most declare, the necessity of repentance, they also most explain. We shall speak, then, of three instances of repentance.

I. THE REPENTANCE OF THE LOST SON

Jesus said there was a certain man who had two sons. Perhaps this was real history; perhaps it was a family that He Himself had known. In a few brief, but immortal, words Jesus sketches the history of the younger of those two sons; his gruff demands on his father; how with surly ingratitude he left his father's home without so much as a "good-bye," and set out to see the world for himself; how he wasted his substance in riotous living—not only the substance of his money, but the substance of his body and of his soul; how as long as he had money he had gay friends around him who flattered him and made a fool of him, but when his money was gone and he began to be in want, kicked him out and left him to starve; how he sank from bad to worse until at length, his brief day in the world of pleasure over, he found himself at the very bottom of the abyss, feeding swine, and so hungry that as he watched the swine feed, he fain would have filled his belly with the husks which the swine did eat.

But down in that far country something happened. He came to himself!—that true, beautiful self which

comes with every soul into this world, its heavenly and immortal inheritance, soon, alas, to be stained and defiled and encrusted with the sins of this world.

"God dropped a spark down into everyone
And if we find and fan it to a blaze
It'll spring up and glow like—like to the sun
And light the wandering out of stony ways." ¹

Christ said that He came to "seek and to save that which was lost," and it was that true and heavenly self in us that Christ came to seek. This man came to himself. He realized the difference between what he now was and what he once had been, and between what he was now and what he might have been, and yet might be. When he came to himself he determined to change, if possible, his condition. So far, so good. Many realize the shame and misery of their condition, but never resolve to change it; but this man determined to do so. He said, "I will arise and go to my father." Many a man has gone that far, also, but is still a miserable inhabitant of the far country, because all that he did was to say, "I will arise." He never arose.

But this man "arose." He not only said he would, but he did. He not only said, "I will arise and go to my father's house," but he "arose" and started for his father's house. There is the turning point in his life's history. "He arose." Without that act, all desires, all determinations, all kindly enthusiasms are in vain. "He arose, and came to his father," and as he arose, I think I can see him taking his swineherd's cudgel and sending it hurtling over the backs of the herd of swine, as if to say, "Farewell, hogs! I am done with you! I am on my way back to my father's house!" "He arose, and came to his father."

¹ John Masfield in *The Widow in the Bye Street*.

He came with true repentance in his heart. He did not come merely with a sense that he had played the fool and made a mistake in ever leaving his home; but he came confessing his sin: "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." There was true repentance; no claim of any merit or virtue, but only, as Christ put it in His other great parable of repentance, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

As he took his homeward journey, that lost son had faith in the goodness of his father. He had repented of his sin toward his father, but he also had faith in his father's mercy and forgiveness. I wonder if sometime on that long journey homeward the weary prodigal suddenly came to a stop, and leaning abstractedly upon his staff, said to himself, "What if my father will not receive me? I wonder if he will forgive me when I return." Perhaps he did stop now and then and say that to himself; but I am sure that whenever he did so, he remembered that last look on his father's face, when he had left home so many years before. He was sure that look on his father's face had not changed. And onward he pressed on the journey homeward. He had repented of his sin against God and his father, and he also had faith in his father and trusted that he would forgive him. That trust was not in vain. It never is! The heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind. "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Sometimes I think that Jesus reached the sublime climax of all His great teachings and utterances in that one sentence where He said that "when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him . . . and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him."

This is the stir and the thrill of preaching the Gospel

of repentance: the possibility that even now as you preach, here at this hour, this day, in this church, some soul, perchance, may come to itself and start on that long homeward journey, which, when it is ended, will set all the bells of heaven to ringing, and all the trumpets of heaven to blowing, and all the angels of heaven to rejoicing.

II. THE REPENTANCE OF PETER

This was repentance from a particular sin. It was the repentance of a friend and disciple of Christ. When I spoke of Christ's great parable of the lost son who repented, perhaps there were some who said, "That's a marvelous story, but it does not apply to me." Perhaps, then, the story of the repentance of Peter will apply to you, for Peter was a friend and disciple of Christ; and that brings his repentance close to all of us.

We can learn more from Peter than from any other man in the Bible, and never more than on this night of his denial and fall. Until it really took place, it would seem utterly incredible and impossible to you and me; and an hour before it did take place, it seemed equally impossible and incredible to Peter himself, for he had said with all earnestness and sincerity, when warned of it, that such a thing could never take place. The story of Peter's fall has so dramatic a setting that it makes the deepest impression upon our minds and hearts, as if the Holy Spirit, who inspired the record of it, had said, "Whatever you forget in the sacred record of the New Testament, do not forget this."

And how could one ever forget it?—the procession from the Garden of Gethsemane; the hoarse murmur of the mob, the lights of their torches dancing as they cross the valley of the Kidron; and Peter away yonder fol-

lowing "afar off," at length admitted at the gate through the intervention of braver John; then sitting down to warm himself at the fire among the enemies of Christ; and the disguising himself as if he, too, were an enemy of Christ; the repeated accusations, by the maid at the door, by another at the fire, and by a relative of the man whose ear he had cut off in the Garden of Gethsemane; his repeated denials, growing bolder and louder, until at length he leaps to his feet, and with oaths and curses says that he never knew Him; then the crowing of the cock; the look of Christ as He is led forth from the torture chamber; the swift recollection of Peter of Christ's warning; the going out into the night to weep the bitter tears of repentance. Whoever having heard that could ever forget it?

In this great story of Peter's repentance, there are three things that stand out. First of all, his bitter tears. It was sincere sorrow and grief for sin—not mere regret, but the "godly sorrow (that) worketh repentance." Other great writers, such as Charles Dickens, and Victor Hugo, can make us weep over the sufferings and woes of others, the pathos of childhood, the griefs of motherhood; but the great thing about the Bible is that it makes men weep over sin. Here are the bitterest, and yet the purest, tears since our first parents wept at the gates of the lost Eden. Yes; sin is something over which to weep. Indeed, it is the only thing to be wept over, for it is the only thing that can hurt the soul.

The other element in Peter's repentance was the fact that he responded immediately to the warning and to the appeal of Jesus. That warning came in the crowing of the cock, for the sound of that cock reminded Peter of how Christ had warned him against his fall. The appeal came in that marvelous look on the face of

Christ when He was led bleeding from the courtroom of Caiaphas and heard Peter's loud oath ringing out on the night air. Sometimes I have wished that the cherubim and the seraphim might sketch for me the look upon the Saviour's face, might tell me all that was in it. But this much I know without the aid of cherubim or seraphim, and of this much I am sure; in that look of Christ for His fallen disciple there was a call to repentance. Immediately, Peter remembered, and repented, and went out and wept bitterly.

Again, in Peter's repentance we see the power of his trust and faith in the goodness and love of Christ. Christ, you know, when He predicted Peter's fall, had prayed for him that his faith might not fail. Now look at this magnificent faith! Do not let the fact of Peter's fall hide from you the grandeur of his faith. "Peter went out, and wept bitterly" after that look of Christ; but he went out trusting in Christ's forgiveness. That, as I see it, is the difference between the repentance of Judas and the repentance of Peter. Judas, I suppose, shed tears as bitter as those that Peter shed that night, and he went to the priests and rulers and flung down the thirty pieces of silver before them, and said, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood." But he did not throw himself down in faith and trust before Christ and His mercy.

The story of Peter's fall and repentance is the most dramatic story of the Bible. But Peter's sin, it is important to remember, is very common. It is the sin of friends of Christ. With one it is such close association with the world that the world would never know that he belongs to Christ. With another it is silence when Christ is spoken against. I imagine as Peter sat about the fire that night he heard those servants and soldiers

say many hard things about Christ. But this time it was not the outspoken, impulsive Peter, but the silent Peter. With another it is deeds or words that deny his Lord. Oh, if a cock were present in each of our churches and should crow its warning for everyone who in some way was about to deny Christ, the churches would echo with the sound of the cock's cry; and if all in our churches who in some way have denied their Saviour were to weep over it, the sound of the sobbing would drown the sound of the preacher's voice.

III. THE REPENTANCE OF THE THIEF

This man's penitence is a synonym for repentance, for we speak of him as the penitent thief. We do not speak of him as *a* penitent thief, but *the* penitent thief, whereby we distinguish him from the impenitent thief. When you speak of the penitent thief, you must never forget that other impenitent thief.

There were two thieves crucified with Christ. They had the same past, the same dark, criminal record. They suffered the same pains of crucifixion. The Roman soldiers drove those nails just as deep into the flesh of one as into the flesh of the other. They heard the same words that were spoken around the Cross; the derisive shouts of the mob; the taunts of the priests; the oaths of the soldiers; the beautiful sayings of Jesus from the Cross. Yet one of them did not repent. Instead of repenting, he mocked; instead of praying, he cursed. So the grace of repentance which God offers to the soul can be resisted. Only God can offer man repentance; but man has the power to reject and refuse the offer of repentance. On which side of the Cross, then, do you find yourself? On the side of the penitent or the impenitent thief?

Let us look now at the repentance of the penitent thief; he is the perfect and beautiful example of what another great penitent, St. Paul, called "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." First of all, he repented toward God. He confessed his sin and rebuked his companion for his blasphemy, in which he himself at first had joined. He confessed his sin. Christ was a sinless Man. The thief declared that Jesus had done nothing amiss but that he and his fellow thief were justly condemned—"We indeed justly; for we receive the due rewards of our deeds." That is always the mark of true repentance. It acknowledges as just the penalty of God upon sin. What sense could a man have of the mercy of God, if he had no sense of the justness of God's penalty upon sin?

The penitent thief repented toward God, but he also put his faith in Christ, for he turned to Him and asked for a place in Christ's kingdom: "Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." When Christ heard that word of repentance and faith, He knew that it had been well worth while to endure the Cross and despise the shame that day. Now let the darkness come down; it cannot hide the light in the Saviour's face. Let the other thief curse, and let the mob about the Cross jeer; He heeds it not, for He who commenced his ministry by saying, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel" hears and answers the prayer of a penitent thief, and takes him with Him into Paradise. So Christ, at the very end, and the last act of His ministry, with loving heart but bleeding hand, unlocks the golden doors of Paradise to a thief who repented and believed the Gospel.

Who will repent? Repentance is not something to talk about or sing about, but something to *do*. Who will repent? There are some of you who ought to re-

pent of one particular sin which shadows your spirit and burdens your back and pierces your conscience, and from which you will have no relief until you repent and lose its burden at the Cross. There are some of you who need to repent because in one way or another you have denied your Lord by associating with the world and disguising your discipleship; by silence in the face of the enemies of Christ; by unworthiness in your life; by disloyalty to His Church and to His cause.

But still the gate of repentance is open. "Behold," said Jesus, "I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." No; no man can ever shut that door of repentance; no man except you yourself. There is only one time to repent, and that time is in this life; and only one day in this life on which to repent, and that is *today*. That thief on the cross had only one chance, only one call to repentance, but he answered and repented. If there is any man here today who sees himself, who "comes to himself," and says, "I will arise and go to my father," then arise *now*! If there is any man who has seen that look upon the Saviour's face that Peter saw, then let him arise and go out and repent *now*, as Peter did. If you see Him on the Cross as that dying thief did, and believe that He has the power to forgive your sins and to grant you a place in the kingdom, then ask Him *now*. Heaven has been ringing with joy over souls that repented ever since Christ took that penitent thief with Him into Paradise; but still there is plenty of room for more of that music and more of that joy. The angels are waiting to rejoice over you! "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

CLARENCE E. MASON, JR.

Dr. Clarence E. Mason, Jr., is pastor of the Chelsea Baptist Church of Atlantic City, New Jersey. He also teaches at the Philadelphia School of the Bible and is Director of the Boardwalk Bible Conference.

CHAPTER XII

"IF THOU HADST KNOWN!"

"And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation" (Luke 19:41-44).

AS I WRITE THESE WORDS, I look up from time to time at a picture before me on the wall of my study. It is a beautifully tinted print of a famous painting by William Hole entitled, "IF THOU HADST KNOWN, O JERUSALEM." Our Lord is depicted in the foreground sitting upon a rock on rugged Olivet, looking across the gorge of the Kidron to Jerusalem rising up from the Kidron, past the eastern walls of the city, past the majestic Temple of Herod, and up, up to the heights of the City of David on Mount Zion. The artist has taken the title and setting from our passage above but has painted the scene as it must have looked to our Lord in the early mornings, after those nights of prayer and Spartan rest on the rough bosom of the Mount of Olives, for beyond the figure of our Lord we see the first glow of light heralding the dawn and relieving

the somber grey and brown of the sleeping city. Silhouetted against the early morning sky is the pensive, yearning face of our Lord as He gazes with sad eyes at the smoke of the morning sacrifice rising from the great altar in the court of the Temple. We can almost hear Him say, "O Jerusalem, how blind thou art! Here I am, thy Messiah, thy Saviour, thy King, the fulfillment of all thy prayers and hopes, the interpretation of all thy sacrifices—and thou dost not recognize Me, but countest Me an impostor, a false prophet, a blasphemer! Hast thou forgotten, as thy first king forgot, that 'obedience is better than sacrifice'? Oh, the sadness of a blindness which does not recognize the time of her divine visitation!"

And all these thoughts, which must have continually passed through our Lord's heart and mind during the years of His earthly ministry, swelled up into a great crescendo of pathos as He came offering Himself in one last offer to His beloved people as recorded by Luke (and the other evangelists) of the day when our Lord rounded Olivet's brow preparatory to riding into the city in the "Triumphal Entry." There is something peculiarly poignant about those words "*If thou hadst known*"! I remember once hearing a little refrain which went something like this:

"No sadder words of tongue or pen

Than these four words—IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN!"

That word "*if*" is so small and yet so large. As we look back on life there have been so many "*ifs*." How many lives have been changed by one little "*if*"! Many a man would give his right arm to be able to go back and change that one "*if*" of unwise choice, of foolish abandon, or of yielding to temptation which has brought

with it a train of events affecting his whole life and often that of those he loves. How many times have we seen vistas of what *might* have been *if* we had recognized that we were at important crossroads and had turned right instead of left—crossroads which are so close when they meet, but so divergent as life goes forward on one of them. How often have Christians confided to me that by failure to discern spiritual issues they took the road of God's permissive will rather than the road of God's first best. God said, "Be My ambassador to dark Africa," but she felt her job was too good to leave and the prospects of advancement too promising, or that young man simply filled her horizon and the fact that he was not called of God to her chosen sphere of service did not seem so important *then!* But *now!*

Likewise every pastor has seen fine young men and women come right up to the line of decision to receive Christ as Saviour, with foot raised to step over, and then have seen that foot lowered; seen them turn on their heels and walk away from Christ—perhaps forever! Oh, how much is involved in the "if" of one wrong, or one right, choice. Never to have had an opportunity would be sad, but to have had God's best within hand's grasp and then to have missed it is enough to make the angels weep, yea, even the Son of God!

And I am particularly interested in *His* reaction because as one saved by His grace, I should enter into *His* heart's yearnings and have and display "the mind of Christ." As I look at my Lord here on Olivet's brow, as He turns the bend of the road and the city of Jerusalem sweeps before Him in one heart-moving panorama, I learn—

I. HOW JESUS LOOKS AT HUMAN SUFFERING

He who made men is not unmindful that they are made of dust. Though fashioned by the Potter's skillful hand into vessels of beauty and potential usefulness, they are none the less fragile as brittle clay, easily and irreparably broken. As our Lord gazed at this stubborn yet beloved city, His eye swept forward to the day of its inevitable judgment. With prophetic vision He saw the rampart (rather than "trench")—the stone wall with which the Romans surrounded Jerusalem in three days, so making escape impossible (vs. 43). He saw the fear, the panic, the hunger, the starving, the pestilence, and finally the avenging sword with which Titus would crush this city. He who was moved over the helpless children (and *even* cattle) of Nineveh¹ in Jonah's day, is here moved over the awful toll of human suffering, especially that of innocent children, which will result from the siege and destruction of Jerusalem (vs. 44). To say that the city deserved the judgment does not change the fact that the Son of God wept over the pain of men and women and children.

It has ever been thus. Jerusalem was a cross section of all humanity and her sufferings but crystallized the sufferings of the whole world. Our God has never gloated over the opportunity of using the sword of judgment, as some have pictured Him, "for he doth not afflict willingly² nor grieve the children of men." The Lord is "not willing that any should perish"³ but ever cries out, "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have

¹ Jonah 4:10-11.

² Lam. 3:33.

³ II Pet. 3:9.

no pleasure⁴ in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" "And God heard their groaning."⁵ We have a God who can be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," a God who does not judge till He must and grieves that the stroke of judgment is necessary. And if He weeps over human suffering, so would I.

And there is much cause for weeping in this old world today. The suffering of bleeding armies; the suffering of bleeding cities; the suffering of hungry multitudes; the suffering of mass migration; the suffering of brutal persecution and extermination. Yes, there is much to weep over, and our Lord is moved for the work of His hands! So also should His Church be characterized by individual and collective compassion for an agonized humanity. While we know that man's sin has caused all this, we pray and long for the completion of God's purpose and the coming reign of our Saviour in righteousness and peace, when the earth shall finally be at rest. While admiring the sentiments of such documents as the "Atlantic Charter," we know the sinful hearts of men too well to rest our hope on such human palliatives. Our eyes are upon Him, and our hopes are secured by the promise of His Return and reign.

I am comforted to know that my Lord is moved by the suffering of the great Chinese nation, now in the sixth year of their travail. I know that the people of the lowlands have not been missed by His loving eye. France in her misery is not forgotten and England's blood and sweat and tears are written in His book. The

⁴ Ezek. 33:11.

⁵ Exod. 2:24.

eloquent sufferings of Poland, of Yugoslavia, of hungering Greece, and of sorely tried Russia are the subject of His concern. The flame and death of Pearl Harbor, the legend of Wake and Bataan and Corregidor, the poignant pain of Tarawa and New Guinea and Cassino all mean something to Him who is "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

I cannot but remember that every man who goes down in death leaves *someone* in tears. Perhaps a mother, or a wife; but usually a larger circle of loved ones and friends. One death sometimes touches scores of people. Multiply that by hundreds, by thousands, yes, by millions, and you will get a wider conception of the total of human suffering. For remember, every German or Rumanian or Japanese boy who falls on the icy steppes of Russia, the rugged mountains of Italy, or the fetid swamps of New Britain or Papua also leaves behind him a circle of sorrowing loved ones.

And millions who may never be involved in the sadness of death, nevertheless have the sorrow of separation, sons from parents, husband from wife and children, brother from sister and brother, sweetheart from sweetheart, friend from friend. Many young couples have had to sell their home and say good-bye to their cherished plans. These separations are painful. Finally, to the always terrible toll of suffering from bullet and shrapnel, add the fact that men are fighting today where once they would have felt it was impossible to fight, from the frozen Arctic to the scorching desert, and the extent of the pain of the wounded is increased manifold. My Lord is moved over human suffering! Am I?

But this is not all over which Jesus wept. Important as men's *physical* sufferings are to Jesus, they are not

the most important. As we see the Lord weeping over Jerusalem, we learn—

II. HOW JESUS LOOKS AT SPIRITUAL LOSS

We are so prone to take the testimony of our eyes as the sum total of an incident. We are so earthbound and materialistic. Describe the pitiful attempts of a blind man to safely cross a busy intersection, and everyone is moved. Describe the sad isolation of the leper, and everyone is moved. Tell of hungry men and women and starving children, and everyone will reach for a handkerchief and a pocketbook. But tell of starved, emaciated, blind souls, filled with the leprosy of sin, stumbling down the broad way of sin to hell, and watch the results—if any! Some will yawn and look at their watches; others will look at *you* as though to say, "I came here to get comfort and rest from the cares of life and now you harry my peace of mind with imaginary tales. You have taken advantage of me. Pray use better taste and judgment next time—IF I come back to hear you!" Still others brazenly sleep. Very rarely, if ever, a few may be moved to tears *over lost men*, whose physical death also means the sealing of their eternal doom. *Jesus* was moved. Why aren't *we*? We unashamedly shed tears over a stirring tale of heroism like the suffering of our boys on Bataan, but tears over men's lost souls are deemed mawkish sentiment, poor taste and out of place. Indeed, one who weeps over the lost will probably be labeled and heralded as a fanatic.

But Jesus wept over lost men! And when God saved you, He saved your emotions as well as your reasoning powers. The Devil has succeeded in getting the Church scared of having a heart as well as a head. Prim re-

ligionists will snort and have something to say to the pastor if ever the evangelist should tell a sad story with a view to touching people's hearts. All appeals must be made to the head! This has been the Devil's all-too-successful strategy.

Certainly, the Gospel *is reasonable* and God has invited men to "come, now, and reason together." But we who have spiritual eyes should realize that *spiritual* sorrows and loss are ten times worse than any physical or social or material loss.

Lest any should think I am stressing this point too strongly, let me call attention to the word used here for "wept." It is not the word used of Jesus weeping, for instance, at the tomb of Lazarus. That word simply means the almost unconscious tears which well up in our eyes and fall down our faces. But the word used of our Lord here is a tragic word. "It suggests rather the heaving of the bosom, the sob and the cry of a soul in agony. We could have no stronger word than the word that is used here" (Campbell Morgan).

If we should see a little girl, unmindful of danger, run out into the street in the path of a ten-ton truck and be crushed and mangled, we would be moved to the depths of our soul. We would not care who saw us sob. My friend, how long has it been since you wept that way over your lost father, mother, husband, wife, son, daughter, or friend? When was the last time you wept over a *lost soul*?

Unbelievers are not convinced that we *really* believe those without Christ are lost and doomed to the lake of fire if they do not repent. We speak of it as though we were describing the multiplication table. It is true, but unmoving. Yet we should be deeply moved!

During some meetings with Dr. Homer Hammontree

in my church, we became burdened over a fine couple, who, though unsaved, came night after night. On the last night, when the invitation was given, Mrs. Mason pleaded with the wife to receive Christ but she politely yet firmly declined, whereupon Mrs. Mason could not keep the tears back. When this friend saw her silently sobbing with bowed head, she said, "Does it *really* mean that much to you, Mrs. Mason?" "Yes, my friend," my wife replied, "I cannot bear to think of you being lost, for I love you and so does Christ." Her whole attitude changed in a flash and, with tears in her eyes, she said, "Then I'll go to the front and confess Christ!" The husband likewise was touched by my burden for him. His mother had prayed for him for over fifty years. Her prayers were answered . . . and ours, by our being undeniably burdened for his soul. Yes, many will never be won, except by prayer and witness watered with tears. "When Zion travailed,⁶ she brought forth." There has been entirely too little travailing in the Church of God and, correspondingly, entirely too few souls born into the family of God.

In the case of those for whom Jesus wept, their spiritual doom coincided with their physical death. It was not merely a general weeping over spiritual stubbornness; it was specific weeping over the eternal *doom* of hundreds of thousands of souls. As we look out on the world at war, and think of the multitude of dead, and have good reason to believe that the percentage of those who are saved is pitifully small, how much more do we mourn their physical death when we realize that their death signalizes their entrance into hell! Jesus wept, and so should we! O God, what a sad fact!

In November, 1942, our nation was horrified by the

⁶ Isa. 66:8.

tragic burning of a night club in Boston. Frantic, suffocating people fought wildly to get out of the inferno, only to pile up, many deep, at the door and nearly five hundred lost their lives. But are Christian people shocked, yea, horrified, by the fact that every day *thousands* of Americans go into a more horrible experience, which the Bible calls *hell*; an experience of terror and pain which is not for a few moments or an hour, but an *eternity* of suffering? We see so little as we look about us, as we read the newspapers. We need the eyes of the compassionate Christ!

Tom M. Olson has rehearsed for us one of the most touching incidents of human tenderness ever told. It appeared in an article by the noted foreign correspondent, Frazier Hunt, in *Liberty* (Oct. 13, 1934). It seems that, shortly before, Edward, the then Prince of Wales, himself a war veteran, visited a small private hospital in his official capacity where thirty-six hopelessly maimed war veterans were kept. He went from bed to bed to speak a word of appreciation and encouragement to the men. As he was ushered into the hall, he said: "I understood you had thirty-six patients here — but I have seen only twenty-nine."

The nurse explained that the remaining cases were so terribly disfigured that she had avoided taking him to them. But the Prince insisted upon seeing them. He was led into another room and graciously thanked each veteran for the sacrifice which neither he nor England could ever forget. Again he was led away, but turned to the nurse and said firmly: "But I have seen only six men. Where is the seventh?"

He was told that no one was permitted to see him, so hideously disfigured was he. Blind and maimed, he was kept alone in a room from which he would never

come out alive. "Please don't ask to see him, sir," she pleaded. But the Prince said he must.

Reluctantly the nurse led him into a darkened room. With firm tread the Prince walked over to the bed. His face was white and his lips were drawn. In the dim light he looked down on what had once been a man but now was a horror. Tears came to his eyes. Then, impulsively, he bent down and kissed the cheeks of the broken hero! It was his tribute, not only to this man but to the Empire's 900,000 dead and to her million disabled men. Never was he to forget his comrades in arms. Never was he to desert or betray them!" What grace for the Prince to stoop and kiss this mangled man!

But how much greater the grace of "the prince of the kings of the earth"⁷ who stooped to give a kiss of forgiveness to men, once made in the image of God, but repulsively marred and mangled by sin; broken vessels in which a holy God could have no pleasure. Yet His "delights were with the sons of men,"⁸ and He Himself was "made sin for us,"⁹ and "his visage was marred more than any man,"¹⁰ that we might, by the merciful touch of the Great Physician, be made anew "like him,"¹¹ "changed into the same image"¹² of our lovely Lord. "And the vessel that he made . . . was marred . . . so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter,"¹³ "a vessel unto honour, meet for the master's use!"¹⁴

May God give us spiritual sight, and hearts touched with the compassion of Christ that we may pray and work and witness to the point of exhaustion to rescue many who have been mangled by sin, "pulling them out of the fire, as firebrands plucked out of the burning!"¹⁵

⁷ Rev. 1:5. ⁸ Prov. 8:31. ⁹ II Cor. 5:21. ¹⁰ Isa. 52:14. ¹¹ I John 3:2. ¹² II Cor. 3:18. ¹³ Jer. 18:4. ¹⁴ II Tim. 2:21. ¹⁵ Jude 23; Amos 4:11.

HAROLD JOHN OCKENGA

Dr. Harold John Ockenga is pastor of the historic Park Street Church, Boston, Massachusetts. He also serves as president of the National Association of Evangelicals. He is in constant demand as a Bible teacher and lecturer and is the author of a number of widely selling books, including *Have You Met These Women?*, *Our Protestant Heritage*, etc.

CHAPTER XIII

MODERN MERRY-GO-ROUND OR ROCK

"Their rock is not as our Rock" (Deuteronomy 32:31).

IF WE BELIEVED that civilization could actually fail and come to an end, we could not go on. When we read of Coventry and the Coventrizing of London, Bristol, Plymouth and other towns in England and then the turning of the tables on Lubeck, Essen, Cologne, Turin, Naples and other cities of the Continent, we sometimes wonder whether civilization is not really coming to an end. But when we ask that question, "Can civilization come to an end?" we are not very serious for the most part because if we actually believed that civilization was now to fail we could not continue with our daily tasks.

In spite of this, it is patent that a greater revolution has taken place in the last twenty-five years than has occurred at any time in history, except at the breakup of the Roman Empire. This spiritual revolution which has taken place since the last war is greater, deeper and more significant than the Renaissance or the Reformation and the only other world-change with which we can compare it is the destruction of the Roman Empire, the

collapse of the ancient world of idols, with its culture and civilization, its science and art, its way of living and ruling. With the Roman Empire a whole world went down. Civilization passed away not to reappear for many centuries. Only people who live in such an era can appreciate the feelings of men when things were going to pieces all around them.

Yet there are many parallels between the Roman civilization and our own. Prof. W. T. Radius summarized them in *The Calvin Forum*. Rome absorbed much of the Greek era and culture. In fact, in the days of Rome's greatest power there flourished in the world what was called "Hellenism." That word describes the Greek culture under the Roman law. Roman strength and force in law and politics held the world together in peace; at least in a semblance of peace, and it absorbed the great elements of the Greek culture so that a combination of the contributions of two histories were bound together in what is called Hellenism. It was possible for one to speak one language and travel all the way from Britain to the upper reaches of the Nile. He not only could use one language, but also one coinage. He could even carry letters of credit in business and could travel with comparative security and comfort, which was not known before that era and was not known again until our modern era. The Greek language, art, sciences and culture undergirded with Roman strength and political economy established a world which was very similar to the world in which we live.

During the Roman era there was a comfort in life both at home and abroad which was unknown in other centuries. We understand that the Romans heated their homes by heating the floors thereof. This is the very latest development in American architecture. There is

a great mansion a short distance outside of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, built by a capitalist at tremendous cost, and the heating system in that home consists of heating the floors of the building as was done by the people of Rome. In Rome they had both public baths and baths in the homes. They had splendid sewerage systems to carry away their refuse. They enjoyed fine roads on which they could go quickly to any part of the Empire, and they had postal systems which were quite general. Added to this, the people had at their disposal the enjoyment of music, art, sports, literature, drama, much of which was subsidized by the government. Prof. Radius points out that the government sponsoring of artists and writers is not new. It was done by the Emperor Augustus and he declares that he is prepared to defend the thesis that but for Augustus there would have been no Virgil and no Horace.

It is also possible to note the parallel in the thought-life of Hellenism and of modern civilization. Modern ideas of materialism may be almost duplicated from Democritus. The idealistic system of philosophy is derived from Plato. The generally accepted educational theory that knowledge is virtue is derived from Socrates. The widespread denial of the existence of the human soul was fully taught by Aristotle in *De Anima* and even the thought of evolution may be found in Lucretius' poem "On the Nature of Things." There are certain remarkable parallels between the Hellenistic era and our own.

The noting of these parallels between our way of life, our way of thought, our material advantages, our leisure, our pleasures, our luxuries and even our mode of treating the poor, reveals the foundation on which comparisons may be made. I know that there are great

differences between the two civilizations which we could emphasize, but the parallels are more remarkable than the differences. What we want to remember is that the Roman civilization called Hellenism crumbled, passed into obscurity and was known no more. Everything which was subsumed under their type of living, ruling and thinking actually disappeared from the earth.

Four great reasons are advanced for the decay of this great civilization, none of which in itself is a sufficient reason. Some say that war was the cause of Rome's fall, but that could not be for with the exception of the *Pax Romana* the Roman legions were marching every year for thirteen centuries. It is not true that the constant fighting of Rome sapped the life of the Italian blood and left it unable to carry on. Were plagues the cause of the fall of Rome? The plagues took place in the second and third century A.D., but they were due to the lack of sewerage which existed at that time and this in turn is declared to be due to the lack of initiative on the part of men, so that they cannot be called the cause. Were economic problems the cause? It is true that these problems and especially agrarian ones existed so that the government had to dispense a dole to those dependent farmers who had been frozen out by the large landowners, but they existed in keener form at 150 B.C. under the Gracchi than they did when Rome fell. Could immorality have been the cause, as Gibbon states? But who is there to judge which nation is more immoral than another nation? Who could judge between Russia and Germany or Germany and the United States at the present time?

Rather there was a deeper reason which is now being seen by various writers such as Karl Heim, namely, the rise of Christianity. A Jew came from Jerusalem to

Ephesus, to Athens, to Rome carrying the message of the Christ which may be called "the fire message." It was ridiculous and small but it was the seed destined to break the Empire. This message was totalitarian. It demanded the complete and full allegiance of the individual to the Person of Jesus Christ. It was not long before the authorities recognized the incongruity of this message existing within the Roman system, for it constituted a threat to the very authority of the emperor himself. Therefore, persecution began. Christians were put in irons, torn on the rack, thrown to the beasts, crucified, burned at the stake, compelled to undergo all kinds of suffering. The judgment on them was that they were turning the world upside down. They were causing men to apostatize from idolatry, customs, emperor worship and accepted tradition. In fact, the very foundations of the Roman Empire were being destroyed. That seed multiplied so rapidly in the hearts of men that within two centuries one out of every ten persons in the Roman Empire was ready to die for his faith. As the old crumbled the new began to grow and it increased into a new civilization. New precepts and principles and practices were laid down which later became the foundations of Western civilization. Truly it was long in its development, but its beginnings occurred in the missionary activity of Paul.

Today that Western civilization or what has been called the Christian Age is under just as great an attack as the Roman Empire was two thousand years ago. The only difference is that instead of the seed which is now attacking Western civilization being Christian, it is anti-Christian. In fact, it may be called anti-Christ. The crisis of civilization is as great today as it was when the Christians began to turn the world upside

down. What is doing this? There are many things when taken from the theoretical and practical viewpoint, but all consciously or unconsciously can be subsumed under what is called the theory of relativity.

I. RELATIVITY THE MODERN MERRY-GO-ROUND

It is said that there are only a few men in the whole world who understand Einstein's theory of relativity. I do not profess to be one of those men. If I were one of those men and should attempt to define relativity for you, you probably would not understand it, but it is possible for us to illustrate the influence of the view of relativity as it affects our modern world.

In the physical world, relativity is a loss of a fixed center to the universe. Of course this began with the work of Copernicus who made a radical change in men's thinking concerning the physical universe. Instead of considering the earth the center of the universe, men discovered that the earth was an infinitesimal speck in an almost limitless space. Moreover, they realized that quantitatively man was simply nothing. The shock which this view or new thought produced on the minds of men was something similar to dizziness. For a long time they lost their sense of orientation. Life before this revolution of thought might be compared to a home made of four walls, the ceiling, and the hearth at the center. But Copernicus threw the ceiling out into infinite space and men became lost. It is impossible for us who have been brought up with the idea of Copernican astronomy to appreciate what an effect this theory had upon the minds of men who were reared under the Ptolemaic system.

Einstein took this relativity in the physical world and applied it not only to astronomy but to the absolute

and self-evident methods of measure. He dissolved by relativity the concept of absolute time and absolute room and the constant quality of energy and the constancy of any body. Today under relativistic physics there is not a single substance which rests in itself and remains constant through all time. All the absolute forms to which man submits in the course of events are in truth only necessary fiction which he arbitrarily supersedes in order to exist. To illustrate, we were told that there is no such thing as speed or rest, light or darkness, space or time. It all depends upon the view one takes of things, or the *perspective*. From the earth one gets a particular perspective of the universe, but from the moon he would get an entirely different perspective of the universe. Stationary upon the earth, a man might observe a plane going some four or five hundred miles an hour in the air, but if he were in the plane and were watching an army rifle bullet shot after the plane going at the same speed, the plane would be at rest in reference to the bullet and the bullet at rest in reference to the plane and there would be no such thing as speed. Thus also when we speak of light it must be in relationship to some standard and it becomes relative. So also with hot or cold and with numerous other conceptions. Everything comes to depend upon the perspective which we have of it.

Oswald Spengler took this same theory and enlarged it to apply to history, declaring that our judgments of history must be entirely relative and depend upon the perspective which we take of them. He also pushed the theory of relativity into the realm of truth and conscience. Just as soon as this happened, namely, the removal of relativity from the external spacial world and the application of it to the personal world, the revolu-

tion of modern times became a reality, for men found that the most sacred things of the world, namely, truth and conscience, right and wrong, moved into the flux of relativity, so that there was no longer any fixed point or center to the moral universe and spiritual universe, just as in science we are told that there is no fixed center to the physical universe. When this last development took place the very things upon which the Christian Age and civilization are based were sunk into the maelstrom of relativity.

In history relativity is the loss of the perspective of an observer, or loss of objectivity. Then everything becomes subjective, relative, changing, flux, and there is no permanence whatsoever except the permanence of the flux itself. Then man becomes a part of the river and he can no longer judge the stream itself because he has no point from which to judge it.

In ethics relativity becomes the loss of a fulcrum by which to move the world. As soon as truth and error become mere poles of our thinking, right and wrong the poles of our action, man and God the poles of existence, there no longer is any meaning to ethics. Then the Archimedian fulcrum so necessary for the moving of the world in definite progress is banished and we can go no further. Then man mounts the merry-go-round and relativity cuts from him everything necessary for a sane, practical, permanent judgment upon life.

Apply this factor to politics and see what happens. Once we had what was called Machiavellism in government, largely the use of brutality or falsehood or violence or intrigue for personal benefit, but today Machiavellism has received a philosophical basis in relativity. It is the foundation of the totalitarian state. Today the only thing that is good in reference to the totalitarian

state is that which is for the benefit of the state. Anything which is not for the benefit of the state is wrong and can be liquidated. Once we had the conception of national law, international law and eternal law on the basis of which the rights of man were derived. In the totalitarian conception all such law is cast out the window and anything which conflicts with the interest of the state is liquidated. If enlightened professors do not agree with the practices of the state, liquidate them. If the Jews are undesirable in the state, liquidate them. If anybody refuses to submit to the practices decreed by the totalitarian state, liquidate him. Contrast with this what has been the foundation of American life, based upon a constitution. The constitution is above the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. To it as basic law both the state and the individual people appeal. It is law which is based upon the existence of God, but when all law becomes relative to particular situations, exigencies and crises, then the rights of man, treaties, humanity and truth may be utterly disregarded and all opponents liquidated. Relativity has actually provided a philosophical basis for the governments in totalitarian countries today.

Apply this theory of relativity to morals. Once we held to a permanent standard of morals symbolized by the Ten Commandments. We were brought up to believe in purity, in honesty, loyalty, chivalry, humanity and other things which were called virtues. We were able to make a judgment between right and wrong in the actions of ourselves and of others, but today all this is changed. We now have morals in a present flux. We are told that the standard of morals developed. That what was wrong yesterday may be right today and what is wrong today may be right tomorrow. The daring

soul of yesterday who violated the mores and traditions of the time becomes the hero of today because he was the pioneer in morals. Women who have cast aside the former standards of morals and declared their freedom have been exalted so as to lead others into the same freedom. Therefore, each one does what is right in his own eyes and there is no standard except that which is appropriate within a particular environment or condition. Hence, we have had a great deterioration from our former standard of morals which may be easily illustrated in multiplied divorces, the breakup of integrity and widespread disintegration of moral fiber in the life of our people. The outcome simply is that the ground of all morality is gone. You may do what you please. Your actions only relate to yourself, to your environment, to your customs and to your age. When you are in Rome, do as the Romans do. Morals are purely subjective and there can be no such thing as a standard which is permanent. This is relativity in morals.

Relativity has also been applied to education. We are told that the German Nazis teach definitely that the only educational knowledge which is of any value is that which may be turned to the ends of the state. Devotion to the state comes first and therefore education is not promoted for the sake of pure knowledge but for the sake of the advancement of the Nazi cause and state. Pure science has been prostituted to the slavery of the state. Personally, I cannot see much difference between the functionalism of German education and the instrumentalism of modern American education. When truth for truth's sake is gone and everything becomes relative to a particular situation and a particular need, when we talk in terms of instrumentalism, func-

tionalism and vocationalism, when we exile knowledge for knowledge's sake and substitute for it knowledge for the sake of something else, or, to put it in another way, when knowledge *per se* ceases and knowledge *in alio* takes its place, then we have relativism in education.

Relativism has invaded the field of religion. There is no such thing as absolutism in religion any more. Every doctrine which has formerly been accepted as absolute is now being shaken and sifted as never before. Nothing at all is accepted on the basis of any authority. Karl Barth has told us that revelation does not exist in the Bible nor in any objective thing. It only exists in flashes and those flashes are the objective side of our subjective discovery. You can not find God's revelation, then, in the Bible, but only in personal illumination. There is no objective revelation to study. Rosenberg goes further and tells us that God is only the other polarity of man and that God was to have no existence without the existence of man, that they are merely two sides of existence. The comparative school of religions repudiates all finality to religion and tells us that at best it is only relative to a particular culture, age or time. Therefore the only possibility we have for a true religion is an eclectic summary from all the religions of mankind. The modern tendency, therefore, is to down absolutism. Let us have toleration. With this all crusading zeal dies and one man's religion is no better than another's.

When relativity takes its full fruitage in Christian civilization it cuts that civilization adrift. Western civilization then becomes a block cut loose from its moorings or its foundations. It may be thought of as a gigantic block afloat on the seas, attacking China, India and Africa. The medicine, the schools, the orphanages, the

humanitarianism of Western civilization make a tremendous impress upon other cultures, but because that civilization is cut loose from its moorings and foundations, it becomes a menace rather than a benefit. The principles on which Western civilization has been built, namely, the seed principles of apostolic Christianity, have been repudiated and, in turn, the ideologies of competing systems are making their inroads upon us. In other words, our great heritage has been dissipated. No one put this better than Saint-Exupery in his narrative of the Flight to Arras. This French aviator, rebelling against the futility of his reconnaissance flight over Arras held by the Germans and full of danger, ready to give up his heritage, his country, his people, his principles and all, suddenly in the vast spaces thousands of feet above the earth, the tracer bullet shells exploding all around him, rediscovered himself and what he calls "Man" which is none other than the universal Jesus Christ. Saint Ex, as he was called, suddenly realized that he and his generation had dissipated the spiritual wealth of Western civilization and that unless again this generation tied Western civilization to its original moorings that it was lost. There is no doubt that the elements of disintegration and destruction are already at work in war, economic problems and social maladjustment. Man's last portion of faith, namely, the dogma which he himself created, his faith in success, in progress, and in world civilization, has collapsed. For many only pessimism remains. The buoyancy of the Darwinian era of unending progress is gone. Instead men are filled with fear, confusion, dizziness of the merry-go-round. They have no point of reference. They are sucked into the maelstrom. They are lost like one who has lost the innocence of his childhood and tries

in vain to regain it again. They turn in hopelessness to catch any straw which is offered to them whether it is the idealism of Communism or the dynamic of Nazism. They do not realize that they have lost the foundations of our culture.

II. THE ROCK

As long as only space and the material universe were drawn into relativity the spiritual point of rest was unshaken, but now the attempt is made to leave no point of stability and rest anywhere in the universe. Now it includes conscience, truth, life and everything. Once relativity was a harmless mathematical and physical science. Now it becomes the deadliest poison of our day, no matter how it is dressed as a morphology of history, as a philosophy, as an aesthetic, or as a science. Anything which says one man may die for a principle in the first World War and I may give the last drop of my blood for an opposite principle in this World War and both of us be right is sheer madness and folly. It reduces all rationality to absurdity. If anyone is to give the supreme sacrifice of life and blood it must be for a truth, for an abiding cause, for something which may be termed a rock. Am I right? Is there any other alternative? I submit that there is.

The alternative to the merry-go-round is the rock called *God*. When I speak of God I do not speak of the sentimental attitude and ideas that some have concerning God, a God of love, of mercy and of kindness alone. I speak of a God of righteousness. The fundamental attribute in the nature of God must be righteousness. Not the brotherhood of man, not democracy, not the rights of man, but right and wrong founded in the Being of God must be the foundation of all society and

civilization. Without this we can never have peace or security or liberty or equality. If there is such a thing as liberty we must have liberty in something and if there is equality it must be in a general background. Men simply are not born equal as such. One is bright and one is ignorant or dull. One is strong and one is weak, but as men created by God we are equal in God and therefore whatever our physical condition, our mental development or our social position, we acknowledge one another as equal before God and respect each other for what we are. It is for this conception of God, a God of righteousness, that we may fight and die.

God also must be a God of truth. We take it that if there is such a thing as truth it is consistent everywhere. It is the same and it is discernible. They tell us that two and two may make four on earth and five in some other realm. If God is truth then wherever we find truth it is of God. Two and two will make four on earth and they will make four in heaven and if I discover truth in science, in nature, in philosophy, in biology, or in theology, I know that in that degree I have discovered God, for God is truth.

Likewise God is love, but when we speak of love it is a law of love, for God said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart . . . and thy neighbor as thyself." This then is the fountain of all that is worth while in the world, for love is the fulfilling of the law and it is not mere sentiment. A love must be grounded in righteousness as revealed in the divine law. Here, then, you have the first element in your rock, namely, God.

The second element of the rock is what I choose to call the kingdom, namely, that "righteousness, joy and peace in the Holy Ghost." This is the kingdom

which cannot be shaken. It matters not whether it appears in Israel's form which is declared to be forever and ever or in the form of the Church against which Jesus said the gates of hell shall not prevail or in the future form under the presence of the King Christ. Nevertheless, all who are in the kingdom and who know righteousness, joy and peace in God are among God's redeemed people described in the Scripture as an olive tree from which some branches may be broken off and others grafted in, but which is the same olive tree throughout. That kingdom will abide forever and ever and against it no opposition can prevail.

The third element in the rock is the belief in the soul. I am aware of Aristotle's *De Anima* and of the beliefs of Dewey and Kilpatrick and Boddy and others who advance the soullessness of modern man, and are really materialists, settling the body-mind problem by denying the existence of such a thing as the soul, but when I speak of the soul I mean the core of man's being which survives death, which will be judged and held accountable for the deeds done in the body, namely, the ego which thinks, feels, wills, laughs and cries. This belief in the soul is an essential of Western civilization, for out of the belief in the soul comes character which includes those attributes developed by faith and life. Without the soul, without character, there can be no truthfulness, honesty, purity, energy, righteousness in the dealings of man with man. We do not believe that such character is given but it is a development in the midst of opposition which man must overcome. Thus the soul which is established in God, which holds before it the kingdom, which is redeemed by Christ, is building on the Rock which no man can move.

III. YOUR CHOICE OF THE ROCK OR THE MERRY-GO-ROUND

Regardless of relativity, you cannot break the fundamental physical laws of this world with impunity. You may speak of gravitation being relative, but if you violate it you will be broken upon that law. No more can you violate the fundamental spiritual laws of this universe. We need to think and walk and live on a valid premise which derives its authority from itself and not from and through ourselves. It must exist apart from me, separated from my thinking, independent of my decision. Only as I have this valid premise, this fulcrum or foundation, can I affect, influence, or help the world. Without this the heart of my spiritual existence stands still. Without it, we may exist, but we do not live, create, or work. There is no cure for the person to whom the premises of logic and morals have only a perspective significance. Nothing that we can utter or do will liberate such a one from the merry-go-round of thinking that unconsciously follows the circular movement of relativity, which is an ever moving fire without interruption, burning what is believed before and destroying what it builds.

Never was a keener recognition of this brought forth than that revealed in the words of President Hopkins of Dartmouth at the commencement on May 10, 1942. "The modern college, with all its facilities and all its resources, nevertheless in proportion to these fails to do a good job in producing men of distinction as did the historic colleges of meager equipment in their first few decades. Their effectiveness then, I believe, was due to the religious impulses under which the colleges had been founded and which still dominated their

academic life. These denied the right of doubt in regard to Holy Grails on the part of men who made no attempt to acquire the vision to discover these. The loss of religious faith in modern times may be held accountable, I believe, for the selfishness and egocentric attributes of portions of all undergraduate bodies, whether at Oxford or elsewhere."

Now you must choose. This is the hour when we must restore the idea of God, of a kingdom, of righteousness, of the soul; an hour when we must bring men to a regenerated experience or an hour when we must lose everything which has been willed to us in the heritage of the centuries. If you want the rock, come with me to Calvary. There you will find a perspective with which to view the universe both in moral judgment, in progress and in purposes. There you will find a fulcrum by which to move the universe in progress. There you will find a cleft in which to hide in the midst of the terrible upheavals of our day. That is the center point of history. It is the division of time. It is the tangent from which the eternal touches the temporal. It is the point from which we know right and wrong, good and evil, eternity and time. On Calvary we know that our prayers are not simply a merry-go-round, but that they can affect things in the universe. On Calvary we know that life is essentially spiritual and from Calvary we know how to make a change in our fellow men.

Then if we would find the rock there is only one place for us to go. That is back to God through Christ. There we will get the correct evaluation of life, of history, of the world in which we live.

No, America was not founded upon the Washington Merry-Go-Round or the philosophic merry-go-round. It

was founded upon the belief in God. Our fathers said, "In God we trust." Like Moses they could say, "Their rock is not as our Rock." It is time for us to turn again to this Rock individually and collectively. This is the hour to acknowledge the God of our fathers. Thus we will be able to sing,

"Our fathers' God to Thee
Author of liberty,
To Thee we sing;
Long may our land be bright
With freedom's holy light;
Protect us by Thy might,
Great God, our King."

There is simply no other foundation and there is no other way.

PAUL S. REES

Dr. Paul S. Rees is the pastor of the great
Covenant Tabernacle in Minneapolis, Minnesota.
He is the author of *If God Be For Us*, etc.

CHAPTER XIV

THE ONLY PERMANENCE

"He that doeth the will of God abideth for
ever" (I John 2:17).

THIS MATTER OF THE WILL, both with respect to God and man, needs to get more attention than it does. We concern ourselves a great deal about our minds and about our emotions. Particularly in our day are the emotions receiving careful study and large publicity. But here is this amazing capacity of our being that we call the will. To be sure, *thinking*, *feeling* and *choosing* are interlacing and interlocking functions of personality, but they are distinguishable nevertheless. "Will," says one thoughtful writer, "is the dreadful price we have to pay for being human."

The cynic sits in the seat of the scorner and says, "Self-preservation is the first law of nature." Having delivered himself of that half-truth, he looks and acts as if he had deposited the sum total of human wisdom. He would make it appear that all conduct is merely an expression, sometimes crude, sometimes refined, of selfishness. But only the thoughtless are going to be caught by that cheap reasoning. If self-preservation is always the principle of conduct, how do we explain the martyrs who, for conscience' sake, refused to preserve themselves, preferring rather to burn amid flaming fag-

gots or be thrown to the hungry lions? Self-approval and self-respect have often triumphed over the lower law of self-preservation. And when they have, it has been a triumph of the will, as that will was energized by the Spirit of God.

THE PLAY OF WILLS

There is a large and important sense in which life is made or marred, blessed or broken, at the point of the will. With tremendous solemnity Jesus declares: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." With such words ringing in one's ears he can understand what a wise teacher means when he says: "Religion is the interaction of your will with the will of God, the interplay of your own soul with the soul of the Universe, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." And he adds, "When a man says 'I will' to God, all heaven thrills with gladness."

Let us then come to grips with the truth of our text: "He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." It is the Apostle John speaking—speaking as an aged saint to his spiritual children. There are Bible scholars who think that this epistle of his was the latest piece of Scripture written. In any case, it gives us words of matchless wisdom and beauty.

I

Consider, first, that in the context we have a description of what is the will of God for us.

God has a will with respect to the character of our life.

Take these words with which the chapter opens: "*My little children, these things write I unto you, that*

ye sin not." This is what Dr. Massee calls the "divine imperative": "that ye sin not." He says it is equivalent to saying, "You must not sin." Right sound and timely are Dr. Massee's words when he declares, "The solemn truth . . . is that God has but one law for men who claim a right relation with Him; and that law is, 'I am holy, be ye holy.'"

There is a curious logic by which some people urge that even Christians must claim some sin in order to keep them humble. Humility is a beautiful flower, and without it our profession of Christianity is a crippled thing, but if sin is the father of humility we shall have to write another Bible. Examine this strange logic for a moment and see where it leads you.

PLEAD NOT FOR SIN

Would you say that a man must take a little whisky each day in order to practice temperance? Would you say that he must steal now and then in order to be honest? Would you say that he must fib occasionally in order to be truthful? Would you contend that he must once in a while violate the seventh commandment in order to maintain his purity? If not, how does it come to pass that some kinds of sinning and some little nests of iniquity in your heart must be tolerated in order to make sure that you will be a humble Christian?

The absurdity of it all should impress us and convict us. The Gospel of Jesus Christ, as an expression of God's will, is not a compromise with sin; it is a cure for sin. It is the secret of living in that zone of moral health of which we read: "Sin shall not have dominion over you."

To be sure, there is a definite procedure given to us in the event that we do fall into sin. The holiest saint

among us retains his own will. He is subject to temptation. He is heir to the weaknesses of human nature, which are many and which may easily become the occasion of sin. If, therefore, the law of righteousness is violated, if the trap which the Tempter set has caught us, we are humiliated but not hopeless; for, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins."

What is John teaching? He is teaching that habitual sinning proves you are wrong with God. The business of sin stops when the business of Christian discipleship begins. But the occasional defeat (which is not to be thought of as necessary) can be forgiven quickly and immediately if we will confess it honestly and pray for grace to avoid it in the future. This indeed is the purpose of God as to the character and color of our life.

God has a will with respect to the worthiness of our love.

I say "our love," but to speak more correctly I should say "God's love in us."

The sanctifying and the adjusting of our affections are matters that come in for definite treatment by John in this section of his epistle. For example, he says, "*He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness*" (vss. 10, 11).

Again, coming closer to the text, John says, "*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the*

world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (vss. 15-17).

ADJUSTED AFFECTIONS

There is a sense in which it may be said that what you *love* is more important than what you *know*. If you love the right things, you will see to it that your knowledge increases along the line of your dominant desires. The opposite is also true: if you love the wrong things, your knowledge will tend to increase in those evil directions. Our modern educational procedures are being based, in part at least, on a recognition of these facts. Our teaching experts realize that education is more than a matter of giving information, furnishing the mind with data, and so on; it is also, and importantly, a matter of developing appreciations, cultivating good tastes, training the mind to enjoy the best things.

Is it surprising, then, that our Heavenly Father should be concerned about our affections and the kind of objects upon which we set those affections? "Love not the world," He whispers to us. And He tells us why: because the "world passeth away," but "he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." And mark you, this applies not only to the vicious and unlawful things of the world, but to the legitimate things as well. Those who take Christ seriously have made a clean break with the Devil who appears as a Devil—the dishonesties, the degradations, the defilements of ungodly practices and associations. The temptations that come to the followers of Christ are more subtle.

The "world" of which John is speaking, and upon which rests the doom of mortality, includes also our business, our pleasures, our houses and our lands, our cash and our credits, our organizations of government

and our institutions of society. Am I not to love these? No, not in the sense of making them my chief desire or my chief delight in life. I have relationships to sustain to them, but I have higher relationships to protect, namely, my relationships with the kingdom of God, which is not "meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." I am to use the things of time and sense, but not abuse them. I am to enjoy them but I am not to be enthralled by them. I am to control them, but I am not to let them control me.

God has a will with respect to the quality of our light.

Verses twenty and twenty-seven bear upon this point: "*Ye have an unction (anointing) from the Holy One, and ye know all things . . . The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you.*"

The anointing referred to is undoubtedly the quickening, purifying and enlightening ministry of the Holy Spirit, of whom St. Paul speaks when he says, "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God."

INTERPRETING THE ANOINTING

As is so frequently the case in the Scriptures, the truth here set forth is situation-centered; it is concrete and realistic. The Christian community had been divided by the teaching and influence of certain men who were pretending to be Christian but were in reality the tools of Antichrist, because they denied the deity of Jesus. Some had been deceived by this teaching and had left the Church. Now, says John, they could not, and would not, have done so if they had been possessed and guided by the Spirit of God.

The Holy Spirit of anointing is the Spirit of illumination with respect to the fundamental truths of Jesus

Christ: His Person as Son of Man and Son of God, and His work as the one and sufficient Saviour of the world. "He shall glorify me," said Jesus. "He shall take of mine and shew it unto you." "He shall guide you into all truth." It is as if the Master said, "This light concerning Me and My Word is the light which the Holy Spirit will give to you, and He will make it so clear that if any man contradicts this truth, you will know immediately and intuitively that he speaks with the voice of Antichrist." Such is the meaning that John has in mind when he declares, "You have an anointing that teaches you."

Incidentally, "ye know all things" is a misleading translation of the original. It is an expression that may be rendered in either one of two ways: either "ye all know" or "ye know all." In either case the word "things" is of doubtful value. If we accept the first rendering, we would read, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye all know that ye have it." If the second, we would read, "Ye know all men, and are able to tell whether they are of Christ or Antichrist." The Holy Spirit is not a substitute for study or education or the guidance of competent teachers; the Holy Spirit does not make us omniscient. This is not John's meaning for a moment. He simply means that the Word of God and the Spirit of God are one; they agree. If the Word of God says, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," the Spirit of God will never contradict that declaration. And if you have the Spirit of God in you, He will forever affirm and attest the divine Sonship of Jesus Christ and the divine way of salvation through faith in Him. This will be your light; anything else will be your darkness.

God has a will with respect to the steadfastness of our loyalty.

"And now, little children, abide in him: that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming" (vs. 28).

"Abide in him." That is God's plan and purpose for you. Weymouth translates it, "Continue in union with him." You have trusted Him as your Saviour; continue to trust Him. You have begun to walk with Him in a life of fellowship and service; continue so to walk. Keep it up! Never stop! Never falter! That—and nothing short of it—is God's will for you.

"THROUGH BAGGAGE"

The preacher-father of a dear preacher-friend of mine was dying. It happened that his annual Conference, of which he had been a member for years, was in session. From his dying bed he sent the Conference this message: "Tell the brethren to meet me in glory. Tell them that, by the grace of God, I am about to reach the heavenly goal. It is all coming out according to plan, for when I started for heaven long ago, I checked my baggage clear through!"

"I cannot know why suddenly the storm
Should rage so fiercely round me in its wrath;
But this I know—God watches all my path,
And I can trust.

"I may not draw aside the mystic veil
That hides the unknown future from my sight,
Nor know if for me waits the dark or light;
But I can trust.

"I have no power to look across the tide,
To see while here the land beyond the river;
But this I know—I shall be God's forever;
So I can trust."

II

If the context furnishes us a description of what is God's will for us, the text gives us a declaration of what it means to do His will:

"He that doeth the will of God *abideth for ever*." Not he that *knoweth*, nor he that *desireth*, nor he that *considereth*, but he that *doeth* the will of God!

History and life echo the Bible as it thunders this message: "Do your own will, and you will perish; do the will of God, and you will be saved." We were made by God and we were made for God; if therefore we deny God or ignore God, we miss the very meaning of our existence; life folds up, collapses.

THE PARABLE OF THE FLOWER

A friend of mine was searching among the ruins of ancient Babylon. Spying a delicate little flower, he picked it up—the only living thing he could see in that huge waste. As he fondled it and thought about it, he found himself talking to it in some such language as this: "How is it little frail flower, that you, so frail that I could crush you between my fingers, have survived, and this vast empire, founded on military might, has perished?" And the flower, said he, seemed to smile back at him and say, "I obeyed the laws of God written in myself—I lived. They disobeyed those laws of God written in themselves—they perished." And the little flower spoke the eternal truth.

God calls the stars, and from their lofty thrones in trackless space they answer: "Here we are, at Thy bidding." God calls the rivers and the seas, and from their spacious beds and winding channels they reply in tones of liquid music: "Here we are, at Thy bidding."

God calls the mountains, and from their vast foundations, laid deep in earth, they rise vastly toward the ample sky, and from their sun-kissed summits fling their eager answer to their Maker: "Here we are, at Thy bidding." God calls the flowers and the grass and the trees, and they, from stem and petal and blade and bud, sing out their happy answer: "Here we are, at Thy bidding." But God calls you—some of you at least—immortal beings that you are, human pilgrims trudging over a narrow strip of territory called time, with your face toward the measureless ocean of eternity, and what are you saying? To that God who is calling you in grace and mercy, calling you to holiness and to helpfulness, and to the higher happiness of unselfishness, you are saying, "No, God, your will is too strict, too difficult, too costly. I want my own will and my own way."

Ah, soul, you can have it, but remember, it will be your poison and not your food. It will be your bitterness and not your blessedness. It will be your darkness and not your light.

HOW IT WORKS

Slightly more than a hundred years ago, in the little village of Northfield, Massachusetts a baby boy was born. At the age of eighteen, while working as a shoe clerk in the city of Boston, that boy was persuaded to take Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour. It was a revolution in his life. At twenty-one he started a Sunday school. At thirty he was a pastor and evangelist whose ministry was attracting larger and larger throngs of people. At thirty-three, Christian worker though he was, he came to the realization that he was not in the center and fullness of God's will. Laying himself and

his work in a new and abandoned way upon the altar of God, he was mightily baptized with the Holy Spirit.

From then on, the influence of his life became a holy pageant of worldwide power and benediction. Both sides of the Atlantic came under the spell of his matchless presentation of the Gospel of God's love in Jesus Christ our Lord. He had no formal culture but he had a wealth of personality, aglow with the compassion of Christ and with eagerness to win men to a saving acquaintance with Christ. He was not a polished orator, and yet he was eloquent—eloquent in the use of those words, however homely, that convey to men the feeling of being understood and of being loved by the one who is addressing them.

At sixty-two this man, whose meat and drink were to do the will of God, was stricken. As death overtook him he testified: "Earth is receding; heaven is approaching; God is calling me."

In 1937, a hundred years after his birth, celebrations were held in his memory both in the Old World and in the New. And does not all of this tell us how appropriate is the epitaph on that honored grave up among the Massachusetts hills, at Northfield? It is a quotation from the Bible that the great persuader of men had used so trustingly. It is the text of this message: "He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." It is hardly necessary to add that the man was Dwight L. Moody, of whom the brilliant, scholarly Henry Drummond said, "He was the greatest human I ever met."

Moody found, as we may find, that in yielding his will to the will of God, he was linking up with the real meaning and the final purpose of life.

PAUL SCHERER

Dr. Paul Scherer is pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity in New York. He conducts the *Sunday Vespers* radio broadcast each Sunday afternoon over the Blue Network. He has a great ministry both in the church and over the air.

CHAPTER XV

THE JUDGMENT IN LOVE

IN THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER of St. Matthew, a householder is speaking to a laborer who is disgruntled with his wages; and the householder says, "Friend, I do thee no wrong." Let us assume that the householder is God, which is what Jesus intends; and that He's speaking to you and me. Then it is clear at once how tremendously significant His words are. I have read them a thousand times. I think I saw them first quite recently! We might remember them the next time some so-called misfortune overtakes us; or when some huge calamity lifts its head above the horizon and grows like a black cloud swallowing the sky.

Manifestly something has happened here in the story which to somebody looks like injustice. Some "wrong" has been done to somebody's way of thinking, and there are scowling faces and resentful eyes. When suddenly on the heels of it comes this gentle salutation: "Friend"! And all at once you understand that beyond the "wrong," whatever it is, there is no blind and stupid thoughtlessness, nor anything that could be regarded simply as chance; but a quiet brow bent evenly and kindly on the life in front of it: "Friend, I do thee no wrong."

I. So I suggest we assume that God is speaking these words; that against the background of our time we think today of the evenhandedness of the Eternal that does no wrong, and the Lord that keeps saying, "Friend." No doubt you will remember the original setting. Possibly we would better start by trying to picture it in somewhat careful detail. Peter as usual had wanted to know something he was not intended to know! He had asked Jesus to say roughly how things would go with Matthew and James and John and with himself. Now that they had left their homes and the people they loved, what could they expect in return? And he got this parable for his pains!

At first glance it does not entirely look right even to us. A good many things do not. But put on your glasses and examine it closely and you will begin to see how it was! One day, said Jesus, there were some men who cannily hired themselves out at six in the morning for a full day's work; and they struck a tight bargain for a decent wage. They were not in business, as we say, for their health! And what they had agreed upon they got, squarely at evening time! But they did not like it! They did not like it because there were others who came to work in the vineyard at nine and twelve; and still others who came as late as three and five: and all these others received every man as much as they did when the day was done!

Now of course you could not complain about any lack of justice in that! So much is evident. The only thing you could complain about was the overdose of generosity doled out to the afternoon contingent! It never does strike us as particularly fair when somebody else who has done less to deserve it than we have gets as much of life's goods as we get! Although, if it is

a matter of fairness, it must be remembered that here in the story these latecomers had not done any dickering with the lord of the vineyard! That is an important point. And it was rather decent of them. They had thrown themselves naked, so to speak, on the master's bounty; so that if he wanted to show them some, it was really none of your business! At any rate, I think Peter got the point. It was a word to the wise! He would have to quit asking such infantile questions as this: "What shall we have therefore?" Such questions did not mean anything with that kind of God around!

II. You see, therefore, that here as everywhere it is fundamentally the nature of God that concerns us. And that is always so. The secret of most of our difficulties with religion lies in our failure to realize what kind of God He is. Which is precisely why I am making so much of it. We keep thinking, for instance, about God's justice. And the very shallowness of our thinking gets us into trouble. We talk of its being "tempered" with mercy. That is a common phrase but the poison of a viper lurks in it. Little by little we begin to assume that at least where we are concerned God will water things down a bit. As nearly as we can make it out, He will not be absolutely accurate. He will not balance level those huge scales of His reckoning—not like a jeweler, exact to a hair's breadth: weighing out measure for measure, visiting, as He says, the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, three generations along and four. That is a bit overdrawn. He will tip the beam with the finger of His compassion. He will err a little on the side of longsuffering. He will throw His love into it. He will pile up the weight of His tenderness, until what comes out in the end will not be justice at

all. We are foolish to lose any sleep over it. It will be justice "tempered" with mercy!

But that is not what "tempered" means! To "temper" does not mean to "tamper"! It does not mean that God will simply toy with the idea in your case and mine, and "doctor it up" with no end of partiality and good will. Nor does "tempered" mean "diluted"! When you temper steel you make it hard and elastic, like a Damascus blade; you give it tone and vigor. There is a sense in which I would be far less concerned about God's justice if He had not tempered it at all: it is His mercy that gives His justice its cutting edge!

I am sorry we have lost most of the rigors of God's justice out of our Christianity! Literature by itself should have kept them alive for us. The Greeks saw the dreadful inevitableness of what to them was Fate: how one wrong brought after it a score of wrongs, until men were no longer free at all, but were bound hand and foot by a kind of tragic necessity. Shakespeare saw it: as Macbeth and Hamlet and Othello one by one waded in so deep that "to turn back were as tedious as to go o'er." Today we have come on the same dreadful inevitableness in human experience: a catastrophe vast enough to shame us forever out of our happy-go-lucky notions of the Judgment that sits undisturbed at the center of the world! With the kind of God a man can glimpse now, I'd hazard the guess that life is not a game He is playing for His own amusement, where rules do not matter much, and anybody can change them!

But worse even than losing out of our religion the rigor of God's justice is this wild guess we make every time we think that we are God's agents, by whom He plans to deal at last with all unrighteous people, to punish their greed and their treachery and their lust

for power—while in reality, we are caught with them in the common verdict which His holiness has pronounced against our kind of world! And there is something measureless and silent about it. It is not that we have to fight wars to end war. Such wars of themselves are unavailing. So are wars in defense of the Christian religion. War is the tragedy to which the moral order of this universe condemns our blind and persistent immoralities. It is more than tragedy: it is the bit of hell on earth toward which all sin-cursed life is bent, and into which it plunges at last with its eyes wide open!

If we make anything less of it than that, we are selling down the river of ruin generations yet to come. To talk of inflicting grave penalties on whole nations when this madness is over is only more madness. It is a kind of suicidal insanity to which even a few great dignitaries of the Church of Jesus Christ have already affixed their solemn seal. There is to be a military occupation of enemy countries for a hundred years, and a partition of them into impotent principalities! If God is still God, that is not the answer! It is nothing but a sharp weapon in the enemy's hands! Ultimately we are dealing with God. He has not reached for power; He has it: and if there is vengeance, it is His! We will instrument it at our peril. He does not care much about how we try to justify the attempt. The arguments we devise have very little weight with Him—or with the laws of motion! History is His judgment; and on this one of its aspects it is absolutely ruthless!

I beg you therefore, against this tremendous canvas, for the sake of the future and your own soul, let us take out of our fatuous pictures, however big they are or little, what we want, and put into life's sober pattern what God wants. That is as steady as it ever was. We

have been inserting the ifs and buts and althoughs; He has not. And we are no longer in a position to pick up this, and lay down something else because we do not fancy it, and dismiss the whole thing on occasion. There are terrors in God's steadiness! I know that most of us do not want to hear about them and we say consolingly, "We must not be afraid. That is for the ignorant. Only ignorant people tremble." Let me tell you this: only fools do not tremble. It was the gentle Jesus meek and mild who said one day, "My friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him." He knew what there was in God that could not be cajoled with an apple on His desk! Life is not like that. It begins to look at the moment as if a little trembling were indicated!

III. But I want to come now to the other side of the picture. I want to indicate to you what is really the eternal paradox of God. A paradox is not a contradiction. It is a double truth that can never be resolved into either one of its terms without the other. "Friend, I do thee no wrong." There is justice in it, and no less justice because of the mercy under those brows bent so evenly yet kindly on your soul. It is with the terrible justice of a God who is in love with us that you and I have to deal! God does not diminish His judgments, but tempers them until they cut like a surgeon's knife to heal! There is a Love that ranges this round, sad earth; and it searches and pursues and tears and exposes until our very souls are His!

To Isaiah, God on one side is like a lion roaring, with His paw stretched out over Jerusalem as over His

prey, never intending to give it up. And then, in an instant, on the other side He is like a mother bird fluttering tenderly over her young, darting down now and then with her sharp beak at the glittering eyes of a snake. Studdert-Kennedy put the two sides together in his book of poems called *The Sorrows of God*. There Christ to a cockney soldier is a Presence full of "sweetness and rebuke," grim and gentle at once, which holds a man fast, staring, and has but a single word to say:

*All eyes was in 'Is eyes, all eyes,
My wife's and a million more;
And once I thought as those two eyes
Were the eyes of the London whore.
There ain't no throne, and there ain't no book;
It's 'Im you've got to see,
It's 'Im, just 'Im, that is the Judge
O' blokes like you and me.
And, boys, I'd sooner frizzle up
I' the fires of a burning 'ELL,
Than stand and look into 'Is face
And 'ear 'Is voice say, "Well?"*

It is the love itself that cuts!

That is why there has always seemed to me to be an exceedingly tragic incongruity about the way in which we represent the figure of Justice. We put a sword in one of her hands and a pair of scales in the other: then we tie a bandage tightly over her eyes so that she cannot see. We mean to say, of course, that she executes her judgments impartially; but with that bandage we say too much. We say, too, that she cannot tell where to strike. And we say in addition that she cannot read her own scales and never knows when they balance—which is, ironically, precisely the trouble with our kind of justice. God's justice is not blindfolded! It looks at you with the longing, faithful eyes of Jesus, and you

cannot turn those eyes aside: they mean to win; they have God's unbroken promise in them!

Strangely enough, the Jews learned that about Him for the first time during the very worst of all the years that ever overtook them: when in captivity they had nothing left; when the only future there was for them was the bitter memory of their great past, they were sure of it; when life had piled up its cruel odds beyond all reckoning. It was then and not before that they became conscious of a righteousness in God which was more than justice; a righteousness that meant the carrying through of all that He had ever said: against the temples and palaces of Babylon, with those magnificent winged bulls that were only a trinket on the hem of her mighty vestments; against the tramp of armies and the sweep of empires. It was then and not before that they saw their own bleak history as His judgment; and straightway that became for them their best and sufficient reason for not giving up! For they saw, too, the hope that was in it because He was in it; and because He was what He was. These snow-capped mountain peaks of the Old Testament rise out of that experience, as the majestic summits of the Alps rise out of the clouds that brood darkly over the valleys. It is the love in His justice which cuts through to the human soul — then gives it ground for its feet and air to breathe, as it lifts its head, like the air of the morning!

I wonder if it cannot make us steadier, too. It is the kind of God we see at the Cross. He is not defeated. He is just seeing it through! Jesus was never pushed about and pressed into a corner and nailed fast. Nobody in Jerusalem that day was so quiet and uncompelled as He. Pilate went in and out wringing his hands; but never once was Christ twining and untwining His fingers

as if He did not know what to do. It is we who are helpless now—not God. He has in His grip—we do not—these days and these years, and what we have done to one another and to Him! They are the most damning judgment life has ever written against itself; but with the very sound of the hammer on the nails there comes pressing in again upon the world this utmost, overwhelming concern, which broke once the heart of God! It is no longer the concern of a limp and lifeless figure on a cross, but of One who is stalwart now with the centuries. His head is not drooping any more. His face looks straight on. It is a poor pass to which His love has been brought again; but with their regal calm His eyes free the issue from all doubt.

If only you could see Him there, whatever it is that has taken place in your own soul or in the world, and hear Him whispering, "Friend, I do thee—no wrong"!

ROBERT P. SHULER

Dr. "Bob" Shuler is the pastor of the Trinity Methodist Church in Los Angeles, California. He is in constant demand for Bible Conferences and evangelistic meetings.

CHAPTER XVI

FIGHTING THE STARS

"The stars in their courses fought against Sisera" (Judges 5:20).

HAVE YOU LEARNED how to keep in step with the stars—how to move in line with the mighty hosts of heaven? The fourth and fifth chapters of Judges tell the story of a man who stumbled over the stars. Sisera was not worse than Barak. Indeed, he was a greater general. He was a victorious general. His armies had been the winning armies. Not so Barak's. Moreover, Barak was a coward; he would not go up to battle unless the Prophetess Deborah went with him. I think any military strategist would have chosen Sisera over Barak.

What was also on the side of Sisera was the fact that he possessed chariots and horsemen and organized armed forces. He had the war machine. So you must write Sisera's name above that of Barak on the score card as the two men face the coming battle.

It is certain that Sisera was not so false and diabolic as Jael, the woman who found the fleeing general weary and famished and invited him into her tent, only to drive a nail through his temple while he slept. However unworthy Sisera may have been, no such crime had ever been recorded against him.

And yet the battle went against Sisera. He was a defeated man before the battle started, though he knew it not. The Prophetess Deborah knew it. I heard the Christian Chinese, I. Hsin Liu, once say: "When God is involved, the battles of the centuries are not necessarily won with chariots." And in the battle recorded in Judges four, God was very definitely involved.

THE BACKGROUND FOR DEFEAT

The character of Sisera's cause was his downfall. I am a Southerner, and according to my way of thinking, no greater man came out of the Civil War than Robert E. Lee. The son of a Yankee soldier has written an American history and declared Robert E. Lee the greatest all-round man of his generation. He was scholar, statesman, Christian, soldier, strategist, patriot, neighbor, man. Then why did he not win? *His cause could not win with God in the field.* The cause of Robert E. Lee was his embarrassment.

My wife handed me a quotation the other day. Here it is: "The wisdom of the ages is to find out which way God is moving and move with Him." That is what Sisera did not do. That is what Robert E. Lee did not do. But some good Southerner may say, "The South fought for States' Rights." Yes, that is the way it started, but not the way it ended. Slavery got into the picture. We in the South might have moved with God in the demand for states' rights, but not in our struggle for slavery. The moment slavery was involved, God was going in the other direction.

I recently heard a man say that if the military strategists of the world would write down the name of the greatest military man of all history, they possibly would write the name of Napoleon. Yes, the little Corsican

possibly would head the list. And yet he lost at Waterloo to a man virtually unknown then and unknown now in the field of military strategy. And right there some of us have made a discovery. We have discovered that it was not the Duke of Wellington who defeated Napoleon at Waterloo. The trouble with Napoleon was that *God was moving in the other direction.*

THE INVISIBLE CONFLICT

Possibly the world's greatest puzzle is what happened to the Roman Empire in the early centuries of the Christian Era. We have a habit of saying almost lightly that the primitive Christian Church, unarmed, overthrew the Roman Empire, proud mistress of land and sea. Historically, that is true. Do you know why it is true? The early Christians had no swords. From the day that Peter put his weapon in the scabbard at the Garden gate, we read of no Christian sword lifted against Rome. But Rome crashed as though ten thousand bombers had emptied tons of explosives upon her. Rome undertook to stand in the way of an invincible army that once a prophet prayed the eyes of his servant might behold. The thing that Rome could not understand was that her generals could not see that army as it marched. Rome was marching one way, and the invisible hosts of God were marching the other way, and they met. That is all.

And so it was with Sisera. He knew his chariots. They were superior to the chariots of Barak. He knew his army. His army was a better army than the one which followed Barak. Sisera knew his own record. Behind him were victories. Behind Barak's army was defeat. But Sisera did not know the direction God was taking that historic day at Mount Tabor. And now I see him fleeing afoot, fleeing for his life, with certain

death lurking ahead. And Deborah the prophetess is tuning her harp. The song is in her throat. Listen to her sing: "They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera."

"The stars"—not the heavenly bodies, but the God of heaven Himself—fought against His enemies!

There are some things I would like to know today. Are we fighting from London or fighting from heaven? Are we fighting from Washington or from heaven? Which way is God moving? That settles it. This great moment in the history of a tangled world is a moment to determine the direction of God and to catch step.

PIVOTAL MOMENTS IN HISTORY

There have been great moments in history. It was a great moment when Christ stood before Pilate. A million mothers might have named their babies Pontius Pilate, after one of the greatest judges of all history, had he only joined the stars that day. I do not propose now to discuss the deeper meaning of those moments, but I do mean to say that when Pilate turned the Lord Jesus Christ over to the mob, he found the stars bearing down upon him. Pilate was doomed. He had failed to discover which way God was moving and to catch step.

Certainly, Jesus was on His way to the Cross and to the redemption of mankind, but Pilate had his chance upon the judgment seat just the same. And it was really Pilate who was on trial. What a moment! Not what a moment for Jesus and redemption. That had been settled yonder in the Garden, in His fixed purpose to pay the penalty of mankind's sin. But what a moment for Pilate! The stars were marching his way.

What a moment when Paul stood before King Agrippa! The old king almost joined the stars that day.

What a moment when Nebuchadnezzar saw three Hebrew heroes come unsinged from a furnace of fire! Nebuchadnezzar professed belief in their God. He was on the edge of the heavens where the stars march, and yet he lived to eat grass like an ox, an outcast from God, defeated. He did not catch step with the stars.

What a moment when Pharaoh stood before Moses, with blood in the rivers and frogs hopping around in the butter plates! Once Pharaoh actually seemed to have decided to let God's people go. But no. His feet would not keep step. Who knows what history's narrative would have been if he had marched his chariots out and escorted Israel over into their Land of Promise? The whitened bones of Pharaoh and his rusty wheels lay along the sands of the Red Sea to testify to the sea gulls and the great white cranes that the days of the Pharaohs were numbered. He failed to discover the march of God and to fall in line.

What a roll I could call of those who truly did join the stars! Abraham, Moses, Paul, Luther, Wesley, Moody, Billy Sunday. It would fag and exhaust a dozen voices to call that roll—men who sensed the directions of God; men who dared to take God's path; men who walked with Him.

And what does this direction taken by the "stars" mean to you? The supreme choice is yours *individually*. Solemnly I warn you that all your background and preparation and previous usefulness will be absolutely worthless if you fail to move in line with God's purpose from this moment onward. God could set you aside in an instant, and you would learn what it means to fight against the stars of God. But all the powers of earth and all the principalities in the heavenlies cannot keep you from success if you set your will in line with God's will.

ROSS H. STOVER

Dr. Ross H. Stover is pastor of the Messiah Lutheran Church in Philadelphia. He conducts the great city-wide Palm Sunday and Easter Sunrise service in the Temple University Stadium. He is the author of *Three Cheers! What Do We Know About Life After Death*, etc.

CHAPTER XVII

A PORTRAIT OF GOD

"AS A CHILD I pictured God as a sort of superman with the organs and attributes of such a being, infinite and unlimited, and, it seemed to me, indefinable. I do not believe that I, with most people, have gotten much beyond that picture. I am wondering whether or not you could give me, as well as your radio audience, a clearer and more satisfying idea of God by explaining just how God appears to you when you pray and talk to Him." These interesting remarks and request were a part of a letter written to me by a radio friend.

A fellow student at Wittenberg College once told me that when he prayed he had in mind a picture of God as an all-powerful Being in the heavens, with invisible lines connecting Him with everything in the universe. Recently a splendid Christian said, "I never picture Him. I just think of His magnificent attributes." I asked a member of our church, "How do you think of God when you pray?" Immediately there came the reply, "I always see Jesus." Really our radio friend's letter opens a great channel of thought, and our answer will have a great deal to do with the success of our lives.

Have you ever read theological definitions of God?

Here is one from the Augsburg Confession: "God is a divine essence, eternal, without body, without parts, of infinite power, wisdom and goodness, the Maker and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible." From the pen of that master theologian, Dr. Henry E. Jacobs, is another brief definition: "God is an intelligent, infinite, spiritual substance." However, after reading such definitions we must remember that the opinion of every theologian is that God, being infinite, cannot be definitely defined.

Christians are often accused of imagining God as a great human being somewhere in the heavens. While our definitions are opposed to such an idea, still there may be some truth in the accusation. And I suppose the reason is that we can only understand human language, and God had to use human language to describe Himself to us. However, nowhere do you find the Christian abusing the idea as did the heathen, who sculptured Jupiter as the god of heaven, Mars as the god of war, Mercury as the god of commerce, Cupid as the god of love, Neptune as the god of the sea, Apollo as the god of eloquence and Bacchus as the god of wine. Without the Bible's revelation, man has usually invested God with the limitations and infirmities of men.

As we endeavor to make our portrait of God, we shall soon be convinced that we must throw away our brushes, canvas and paints. While I can apprehend God, still I cannot comprehend Him. I think that is the reason that the Scripture, after naming God in more than five hundred ways, very often uses the phrase, "the name of God." Human language cannot fully describe Him. He must be spiritually discerned.

GOD IS A PERSON

That is the first fact which we must firmly grasp. Never in the Bible is God described as "It." The pronouns used are always "I," "he," "me." We read in John 4:24: "God is a Spirit." When folk consider that, they are inclined to lose the idea that God is a Person. It seems that many cannot avoid believing that to be a person one must have hands, feet and a body. I am a person now, while I am in the body. I shall be just as real a person when I leave my body and dwell with God in my spirit. "God is love," the Bible says. If you twist that verse so that it reads, "Love is God," you will lose the entire Christian teaching concerning God. God is justice and mercy, and every other moral perfection, but justice is not God. He is neither a principle nor an influence. God is a real Person. He lives. He knows. He sees. When we pray, "Our Father," we can think of Him as just as real to us as our earthly parents.

The Bible declares God to be a Trinity. Trinity means "three in one." In other words, in the Divine Godhead, there are three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The Bible further instructs us that these three do not exist apart like three human beings, but that these three are one Divine Essence. "I cannot understand that, and therefore I will not believe it," exclaims many a person. It is a significant fact that every evangelical Christian Church on the face of the earth believes in the Trinity, though none can understand it. Friends! What do we understand? We know that food nourishes the body, and yet, without understanding how it is changed into energy, we eat it. We harness electricity and it illuminates our homes, yet no one understands it. Tenny-

son in the following poem endeavors to show the mystery of life and how little we understand:

Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies;
Hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.

Here on earth we have many things which are three in one. We readily believe them, though we do not understand them, for instance, the mind. Intellect is mind; emotion is mind; will is mind—three in one. Just press the button and let that mysterious thing we call "electricity" into your room. In it are light and heat and power—three in one. In the laboratory men experiment with the substance H_2O , and find that this one substance can be turned into ice and steam and water, three in one. Ice is not steam; steam is not water; and yet all of them are H_2O . Marvelous! Beyond understanding, and yet true. We almost hear the Master rebuking us as He did Nicodemus: "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" Though we cannot understand how the Son proceeds from the Father, and the Holy Spirit was poured out from the Father and Son, still it works perfectly in man's experience. All Christians everywhere, for the past nineteen hundred years, have experienced the same love of the Father, the same joy of salvation brought to us by Christ the Son and the same enlightenment and power given us by the Holy Spirit. There is a fullness to the belief in the Trinity which none but Christians have ever enjoyed.

While thinking of a portrait of God, we fall on our

knees and exclaim, "How small is the mind of man and how magnificent that great Person, God!" But even to exclaim that helps to give us life and confidence.

Let us briefly ponder over the magnificent attributes of God revealed to us in the Bible. GOD IS INDEPENDENT. He sustains Himself and the universe, and depends upon no other. HE IS INFINITE. He cannot be measured, circumscribed, nor defined. HE IS ETERNAL. He never had a beginning, and will never have an ending. Miracle of miracles! And yet it would have to be that way, for if you should ask, "Who made God?" you would have to answer, "God made God" and continue so to answer until you would grow weary. GOD IS CHANGELESS. In Him there is no variation. GOD IS PRESENT EVERYWHERE. HE KNOWS ALL THINGS. Nothing is hidden from His eye. HE IS ALMIGHTY. His greatness is unsearchable. HE IS PERFECT. God can do no wrong, for written in His very nature are love, justice, truth, grace and holiness, in all their perfection. Jesus said, "Your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). Certainly His personality is so magnificent that there is not canvas to contain Him, nor paints to depict His portrait.

GOD IS INVISIBLE

Immediately we see our difficulties enlarged. Our Lord Jesus said, "No man hath seen God at any time" (John 1:18). "God is a Spirit" (John 4:24). A spirit cannot be seen, unless clothed in some form.

"But," I have heard it declared, "the Bible says that God created man in His own image! [Genesis 1:27]. Does not that mean that God has a face, hands, feet and a body?" There are two verses in the Scripture which reveal to us what is meant by the "image of

God." In Colossians 3:10 it is written: "The new man . . . is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him"; and in Ephesians 4:24 is this thought: "Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." God created man so that he would be like God in *knowledge*, in *righteousness* and in *holiness*. It is in this sense that we are created in the "image of God." The term has no reference whatsoever to man's hands, feet and body. This is a most enlightening fact. Be sure to grasp it.

I HAVE SEEN HIM

It seems queer to make this statement after what has previously been said; so let me explain. God said to Moses, "The similitude of the Lord shall he behold" (Numbers 12:8). Moses saw God more clearly than any man up to his time. However, neither Moses nor any other Old Testament character ever saw God so clearly as has the Christian. This is the reason: "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1:18). Not in a vision, nor in a dream, have Christians beheld God, but in Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Himself said, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father" (John 14:9).

Man has been gazing into the picture frame of the great universe to see the portrait of God. Because the picture was not clear and because it was beyond his knowledge, there has been a universal yearning that God would come down and walk in our midst. It is this same yearning that possessed the little boy whose father was a missionary and far from home. In fact, the boy had never seen him. In the parlor, in a beautiful frame, was a large picture of his father. The boy would often stand before that picture and gaze at it

while his mother described his father. One day the boy revealed the deepest yearning of his heart when he said, "Mother, I wish father would come down out of that frame." I don't know whether or not the boy ever saw his father, but I do know that our Heavenly Father came down out of the frame, and we have seen Him face to face in the Person of Jesus. No longer is He far away, unknown, to be wondered about. During the three wonderful years of Jesus' public ministry, we secured a perfect portrait of God.

DRAW IT ON THE CANVAS OF YOUR SOUL

Let the divine brushes and colors of God's Word portray Him so clearly that you can see Him at all times. How rich your life will then be!

HIS LOVELY FACE! Jesus looked up into heaven and said, "Father." Oh, the brightness of that face! At another time He looked at hard, scornful hearts, and His face grew angry. Again He gazed in sadness upon the rich young ruler as he turned away. Our canvas sparkles, for the face reveals perfect cheer, indignation against unrighteousness and a longing for man's salvation. Jesus' face is the face of God.

That lovely face was reflected in Saint Stephen. When the stones which were hurled at him were crushing out his life, he turned his face toward heaven, and it became a mirror reflecting God as he prayed, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." God's face is like that!

HIS MARVELOUS EYE! He not only saw Nathanael hidden under the fig tree, but He viewed the secret things of his heart. One time He said, "I must go through Samaria," for there He visioned a woman who would become His disciple. Again, He turned upon the scribes and rebuked them: "Wherefore think ye evil in your

hearts?" On another occasion He fixed His gaze upon the world and the centuries to come and said, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." When the disciples heard Him say that He would be crucified, they became sad, for they thought that would be the end, but His eye pierced through the Cross and the grave. Eight times before He was crucified He prophesied that He would arise from the grave. Jesus' eye was the eye of God.

That eye was reflected in Father Heyer. The mission fields of India called, but no man would respond. When more than eighty years of age, that saint of God stood up in the Synod, and while he looked upon his fellow ministers, his yearning eye traveled thousands of miles to faraway India, where millions of souls were without God's portrait, and he uttered the words, "Here am I, Lord; send me." God's eye is like that!

HIS PERFECT EAR! "Lord, save me!" cried Peter as he sank into the water. That cry Jesus never failed to hear. When lepers called from the distant hill, Jesus answered, "Go shew yourselves unto the priests." They were healed as they went. Every sigh, every whisper, every cry the Saviour hears. Jesus' ear was the ear of God.

Miss Lottie Martin became a mirror reflecting the ear of Jesus. While she was sitting in the pew of our church, God whispered to her. She was then a nurse in the University Hospital. She heard the cry of suffering humanity in a faraway land and arose, determined to meet that need. God's ear is like that!

HIS STRONG HAND! His fingerprints are to be seen everywhere. Mountains, oceans, valleys and heavens reveal them. But His strength was never more clearly seen than when Jesus called, "Lazarus, come forth!"

and from the grave came one who had been dead for four days. Behold! He touches the blind and they see; He speaks to the sick and they are made whole; He lays His hand upon the sinner, and he becomes a cathedral of beauty. Jesus' hand was the hand of God.

Mr. John McIntire is a part of the reflection of the hand of God. Lifted from sin and shame, he has been God's instrument in reclaiming for heaven tens of thousands of fallen men. God's hand is like that!

HIS FEET! Think of them as they carried the Master to the home of Jairus, where the little daughter had died, and the sad cry for comfort had come from her parents' lips. Throughout Palestine those feet took Him, that men might look upon Him, the portrait of God. And when, at the close of His ministry, those feet bore him to the Mount of Ascension, He lifted up His hands, blessed the disciples and commanded them to carry the Gospel to the ends of the world. Jesus' feet were the feet of God.

As Christians, throughout the centuries, have borne God's message of salvation to the lost, they have reflected the feet of Jesus. God's feet are like that!

THE LOVING HEART OF GOD is depicted in the Person of Jesus. Mercy flowed wherever need was expressed. In Him at all times men could see and feel the heartbeats of the Heavenly Father. Those streams of mercy flowing from the heart of God can be viewed most clearly on Mount Calvary. They had mocked Jesus, spat upon His face and nailed Him to the Cross. His beautiful but marred face turned to heaven and His lips moved in prayer, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Finally they pierced His side with a spear, and blood and water came forth, showing that

He had died with a broken heart. Oh, how God loves the world! In Jesus can be seen the heart of God.

I shall never forget how my life was influenced by this simple little story. An old Christian fisherman had saved a drunken unbeliever who had fallen overboard. The next day the old fisherman saw the same man in his boat some distance away. He rowed near him, and called, "Good Morning!" The man, whom he had saved, did not answer. "Don't you remember," said the old fisherman, "I'm the man who saved you from drowning yesterday?" With curses on his lips, the unbeliever turned his boat in another direction. The old man sadly looked up into heaven. There ran through his mind the cruel way in which men had treated the Saviour, and he muttered, "O Lord, how I pity Thee! How I pity Thee!" God's heart is like that!

Certainly we now have a portrait of God. Jesus is that portrait. And, as you gaze upon Him and follow Him, a most marvelous thing will happen to you. His living portrait will be engraved upon your soul, and as a mirror you will reflect the beauty of God. Keep His portrait constantly upon the mantle of your life and He will transform you until finally you will become "like him."

Earth's crammed with heaven
And every common bush alive with God,
But only he who sees, takes off his shoes.

—*Browning*

WALTER L. WILSON

Dr. Walter L. Wilson is a medical doctor who has had a great ministry as a Bible teacher. He is president of the Kansas City Bible College, conducts a great radio broadcast and is the author of a number of fine books and booklets, among which are *Happiness in the Home*, *The Romance of a Doctor's Life*, *The Doctor's Best Love Stories*, *Messages on Romans*, *Messages on Philippians*, etc.

CHAPTER XVIII

"AS FAR AS TO BETHANY"

DR. LUKE IS VERY CAREFUL to give us the details of Jesus' life as no other one has done. His book is the longest book in the New Testament. His descriptions are carefully given. He includes many observations which others would not and did not see.

In Luke 24:50, we read: "And he led them out as far as to Bethany." That was far enough. That was quite sufficient to bring to the minds of the disciples all the great lessons that He would have them learn after His departure. Bethany is on the eastern approach to the Mount of Olives. It is near the junction of the Jericho road and the main road. Just beyond Bethany one may, if he chooses, take the road that goes down to Jericho. The love of our Lord for His own was revealed in His leading them out to this particular place. He could have taken them to Nazareth or Capernaum or even up to Tyre. These places, however, would not have offered the wonderful teaching opportunities that were to be found at Bethany. Our Lord always does the right thing. His wisdom and His judgment are perfect.

The name "Bethany" seems to have several meanings.

Some think it means "the house of palms," others, "the house of God." It seems to me, however, that the consensus among better Bible students is that it means "the house of sorrows." This seems to fit Bethany more perfectly because it was, indeed, a place of many sorrows. Many griefs occurred at Bethany because of those who took the road down to Jericho and fell under the curse. There was also the sorrow of Jesus' disappointment in that his friends failed to invite Him to breakfast one morning before He started His journey back to Jerusalem after He had spent a night in prayer. It must have been at Bethany that the asses were tied and were unable to go on their own path until Jesus came. It was there that Lazarus died and the hearts of his two sisters were broken. At Bethany, the leper was shut out from his family and home, separated from his business and from the synagogue to wander in the hills an outcast. At Bethany, a poor woman came in her sorrow and worshiped the Lord through her tears as she poured upon Him the perfume of her loving care. It was at Bethany that Jesus found it necessary to rebuke Martha in a very gracious way, and here Mary learned the sweetness of sitting at Jesus' feet to learn of Him and to enjoy His precious presence. Here it was also that men murmured because two devoted and loving women anointed His head. We shall consider these sorrows and the blessed remedy that was found when Jesus came.

He led them out as far as to Bethany because it was at Bethany that Lazarus was raised from the dead (John eleven). No one can give life except the eternal God who controls all life. No one can stop the processes of decay but the living Lord. No one can release from the bonds and bands of death but the sovereign Saviour. He wanted His disciples to remember and never to for-

get that He alone could stop the ravages of disease, conquer death, and give life to the worst who are dead in trespasses and in sins. He wanted them to be constantly reminded of this so that they would never preach good works for eternal life, nor religious observances, nor character-building, nor any other substitute. He would have them bring Himself with His life-giving Word before the hearts and souls of those to whom they ministered. There at Bethany they would be reminded of this. He wanted them there close to that empty grave, close to the living Lazarus, so that the lesson would be deeply impressed upon their hearts.

He led them out as far as to Bethany because it was at Bethany that Simon the leper was cleansed. Leprosy is a type of sin. Simon was afflicted. No doubt, he had sought every means of cure and every remedy. The Scripture does not record the extent of his leprosy because he is a picture of every sinner, whether he have little or much of the leprosy of sin. No doubt Simon had been shut out from his home, separated from his family, could not attend to his business, and certainly could not be found in the house of God worshipping his Lord. His was a poor life, a wrecked life; sorrow and sadness filled his soul. His future was hopeless. His end was certain. Then Jesus came. In some manner, we do not know how, they met. In some way which is not described, Jesus cleansed him from his leprosy. We do not know his sufferings of those years when his broken heart yearned for his loved ones. We only know that he met the Lord Jesus one day and the leprosy disappeared. He returned to his home with his heart filled with praise and worship for the One who had saved him so fully and blessed him so richly.

Jesus would have the disciples remember and never

forget that He alone has power to cleanse from sin and to save from the ravages of evil. Christ alone is the antidote for sin and the remedy for wickedness. He is the only healer of the tragedies of a disobedient life. He took them to Bethany where, perhaps, they could see Simon and certainly be aware of his presence there in his own house with his loved ones. Thus they would have a reminder of the value of Christ and of the utter uselessness of all substitutes for Christ.

He led them out as far as to Bethany for they had seen much sorrow there. They had seen Him have sorrow there. They had seen Him bring a remedy for sorrow, and He would remind them again just before leaving them that they, too, were going out into a life of sorrow. Each one would have a broken heart because of Him. Each one would be persecuted because of His Gospel. Each one would find enemies as they went about preaching His Word. It was at Bethany that Mary and Martha shed those bitter tears of hopeless sorrow because their brother was dead. They had seen his spirit leave the body after the days of fighting the disease—the body wasting, the eyes dimming, the breath shortening—and beheld finally the repose in death. Their hearts were broken for they loved their brother. They were deeply disappointed in the Master because He had not come and prevented that tragic loss. They could not explain to their friends how it was or why it was that this mighty Lord failed them in the hour of their great need. They could not understand it. Their hearts were broken and their spirits wrecked. Then Jesus came. The tears were dried, Lazarus was raised, the home was restored, faith was revived, and love was renewed. They went home from the sepulcher one on each side of Lazarus, no doubt,

singing the praises of that marvelous Friend of theirs, the Son of God. So Jesus took His disciples there. He wanted them to know without a question that He alone could dry the tears and bring sunshine instead of shadow, give the oil of joy for mourning and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. They would find other broken hearts as they went about. He would have them offer Himself to the hearts of those who sorrowed that He might comfort and heal.

He led them out as far as to Bethany because it was at Bethany that He received from two loving hearts the expression of their devotion by means of the fragrant ointment. One of these was that delightful hostess, Mary. The incident is recorded in the twelfth chapter of John. It was there in Lazarus' home that a feast was made so that his friends might see him returned to his home after those tragic days in the grave. No doubt Mary served at that feast also. She loved to do kind things for her Lord and I am sure she would prepare the meal with a happy heart because of her distinguished guest. She would have a special joy in this banquet because of the miracle which had been wrought upon Lazarus. She also showed her respect and honor for our Lord by anointing Him as was the custom. Kneeling at His lovely feet, she spread upon them the pound of spikenard, very costly and fragrant. Kneeling there in utter abandonment to Him, she wiped His feet with her hair. There were no tears now as there were in Capernaum when the woman kneeled in deep contrition and penitence. Those were penitential tears, but here it was loving devotion. Thus Mary revealed the thoughts of her heart and the adoration of her soul for the Son of God who had power over death and power to give life.

Another woman also revealed the thoughts of her heart as she came in another house in Bethany, the house of Simon the leper. It was four days after Mary anointed His feet that this unnamed woman brought her fragrant ointment to anoint the head of Jesus. She, too, loved and worshiped the Lord. She, too, saw in Him all that her heart desired. He was her God, her Lord, her Saviour. She brought her best to Him. Thus she fulfilled with Mary and with others that blessed forty-fifth Psalm: "All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad."

Jesus led His disciples out to Bethany that they might learn the lesson of worship and devotion. He wanted their hearts' affections. He wanted their devotion to Him personally. He knew that they would be zealous in their work, active in their service, and orthodox in their ministry, but that was not sufficient. He would have them remember and never forget that His heart wants the heart-love of His people and especially of the leaders of His people. They would be reminded at Bethany that Mary worshiped Him and the nameless woman worshiped Him and that they should continue to worship Him in spirit and in truth.

He led them out as far as to Bethany that they might remember the keen disappointment of His heart one morning when He was left alone to make His way back to Jerusalem after having spent a night in prayer at Bethany. Of course, we do not know the circumstances, but one thing is evident: no one gave Him any breakfast. He had been praying for them, no doubt, during that night season. He had been alone with His Father instead of seeking rest on a pillow. He had their interest at heart, surely, in that prayer season. They were

sleeping while He was praying. Then the morning came but no one cared. He was left homeless and friendless that morning with no one to welcome Him in for a friendly meal. We find in Mark 11:12 that as He left Bethany, He was hungry. Certainly if there was any place in Palestine where He should not have been hungry, it was at Bethany. Many friends were there. Many homes had been blessed by His presence and His ministry. They all should have cared for Him but none seemed to do so. Coming to the fig tree, He found leaves only and no fruit. What a keen disappointment! What sorrow must have filled His heart!

He made no comment, however, concerning the thoughtlessness of the people nor the carelessness of His friends. He was full of grace. His was a heart of love. He made no complaint. He led His disciples out to this little village to remind them that they, too, would have disappointments—friends would fail them and leave them. Sometimes those who should care the most would perhaps care the least. They must be prepared for such disappointments. Jesus would have them remember and never forget that the servant is not above his Master and that they might expect to receive treatment as unhappy and as unkind as that which He had received. At Bethany, they would remember this.

Jesus *led them out as far as to Bethany* that they might remember and consider seriously the sweet portion which Mary chose and which delighted the heart of Christ. Having finished her work, she sat to worship and to learn. Jesus knew that the disciples would busy themselves with telling what they knew and describing what they had seen. Jesus knew that as the Church grew there would be additional work to do and the disciples would be cumbered with office work, visitation,

clerical work, and the finances, Church quarrels and problems of all sorts connected with every Christian enterprise. He did not want them to become submerged in "things." He wanted them to learn the value of being alone in fellowship with Christ, to look afresh into His face and be renewed in their spirits by His messages for their hearts. At Bethany, He would have them remember and never forget that He prefers worship above service; that He prefers to be loved above being served; that He desires our hearts to have deep longings after Himself. The service and the worship are not to be disconnected or disassociated but they are to be united for His glory and His joy.

And then *He led them out as far as to Bethany* so that they might remember Jesus' feelings concerning those who grumble and find fault. Martha was finding fault with both Jesus and Mary. She wanted to tell Jesus how to run Mary's life. She thought Jesus was a bit remiss in that He did not make Mary do what she should. Poor Martha! She was more busy at serving her Lord than in loving Him. She thought more of her service *to* Christ than of the enjoyment of being *with* Christ. His needs meant more to her than His personal presence. Jesus knew that the disciples might fall into this same error as many do today. Therefore He took them out to Bethany that they might remember and never forget that they might sometime fall into that error and need to be rebuked by Jesus.

The fine spirit in which Martha took the rebuke is revealed by the fact that in John twelve, the Spirit definitely records these words: "There they made him a supper; and Martha served." She did not become angry because of the reproof and refuse to serve any more. She did not say, "Well, if I have to do it all,

they can get somebody else next time." Her heart accepted the rebuke and she continued to serve her Lord. What a lesson for the disciples to learn! God grant that we may learn it also.

Jesus *led them out as far as to Bethany* that they might remember the story of the faultfinders. In John twelve, at the first anointing during the Passover week and six days before the Passover, Judas found fault. He complained because of Mary's extravagance in the expression of her love for her Lord. In Mark fourteen, we read that the guests at the house of Simon the leper complained because of the so-called "waste" of perfume on this Stranger of Galilee. So it has always been and so it will ever be. Men will lavish their gifts upon those whom they love in their own circle but are not always so bountiful in that which is placed in the collection plate at the church. Surely Jesus deserves our best. Surely Christ should have our best gifts. Jesus would have the disciples remember and never forget that they, too, would probably be bitterly criticized and, in fact, persecuted and prosecuted because of their love for Him and because they gave their lives to Him. He would have them keep constantly in mind that at Bethany He Himself was despised and rejected of men. Therefore, they might expect to receive no better treatment.

What lessons there are at Bethany! The Lord grant that we, too, may visit Bethany more often and learn the lessons that Jesus intended the disciples to learn.

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